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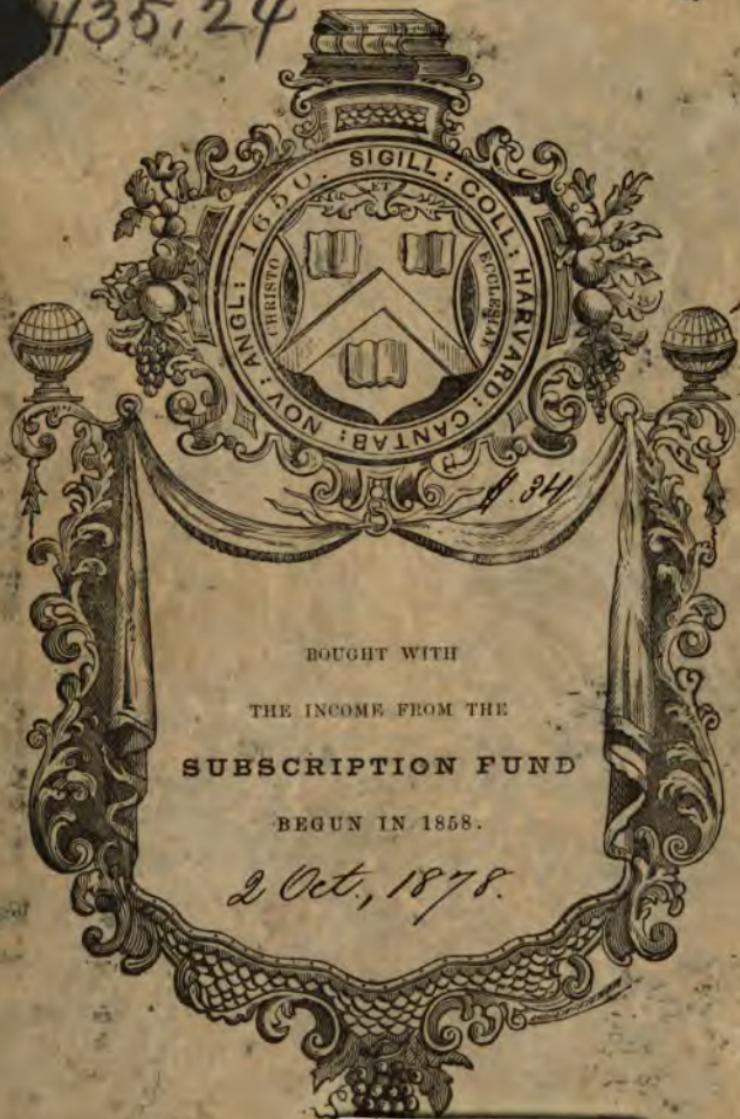
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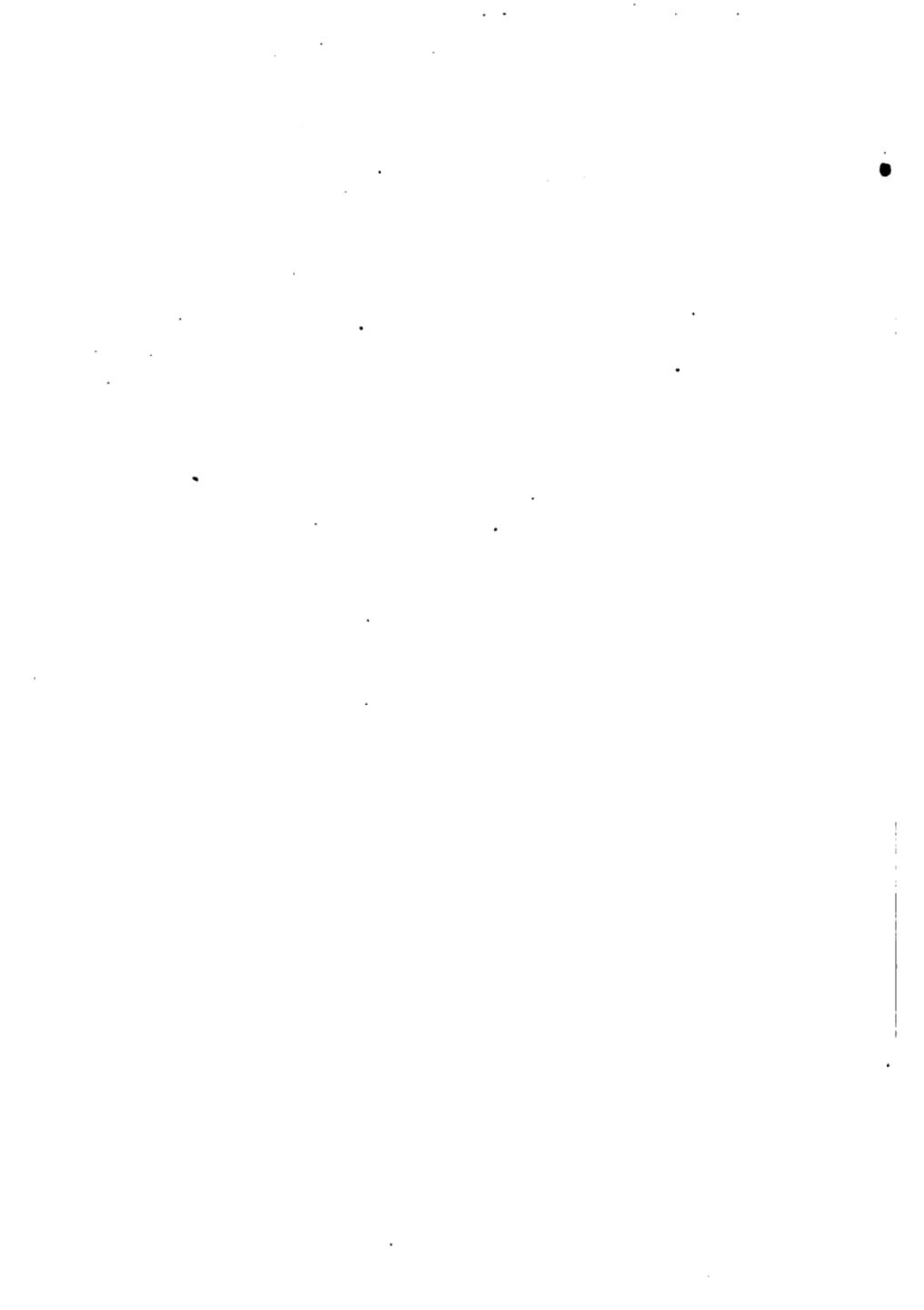


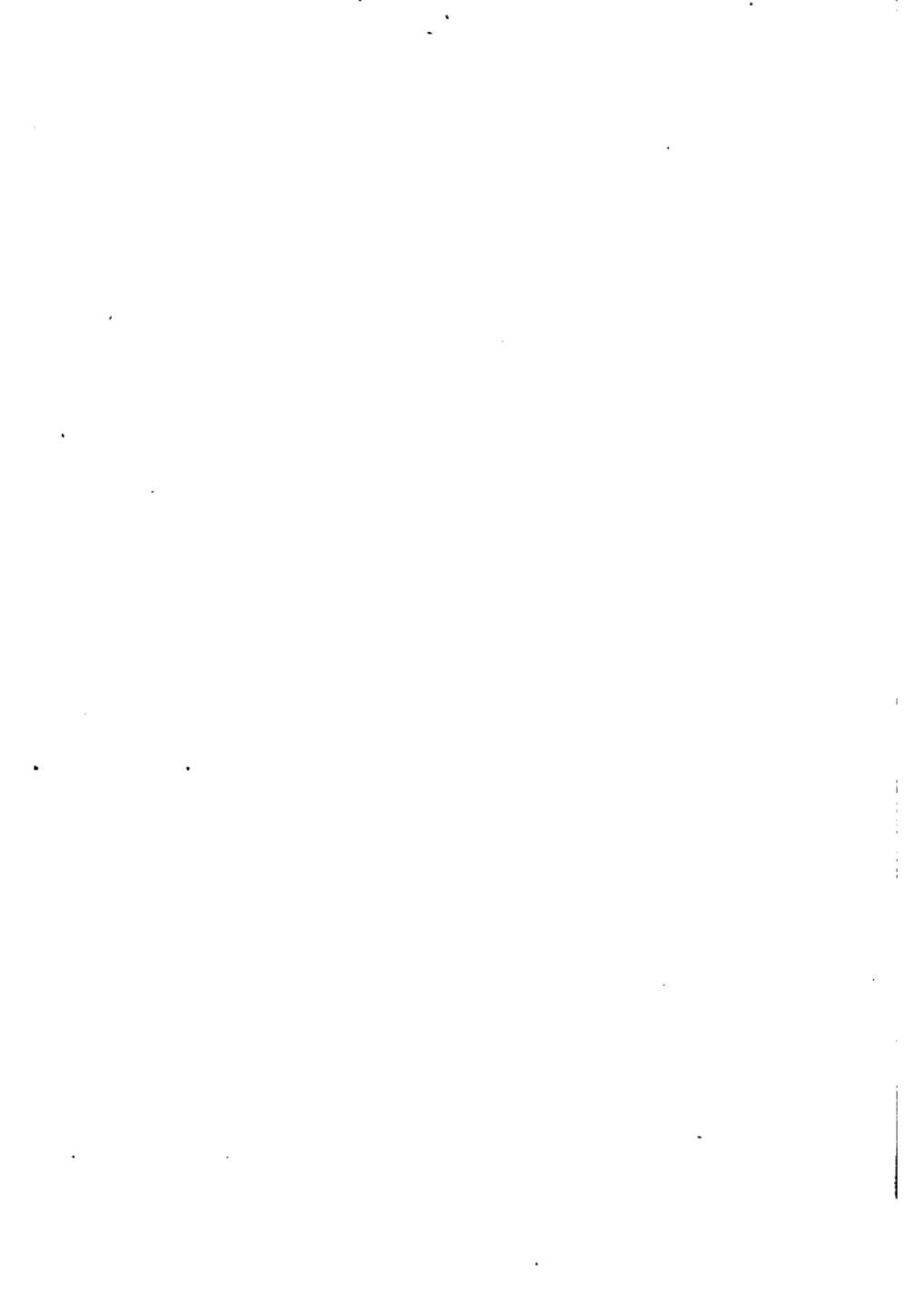
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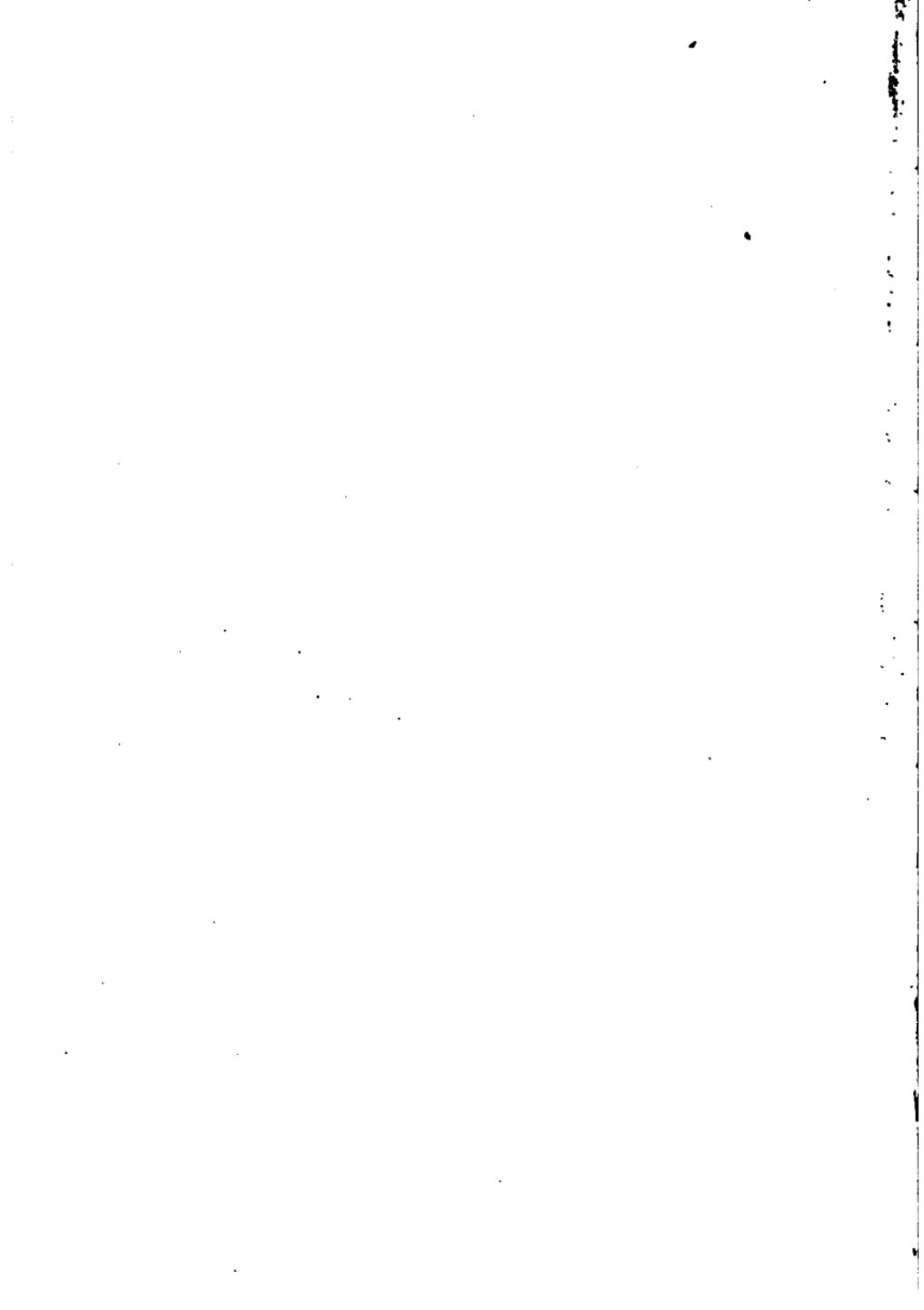
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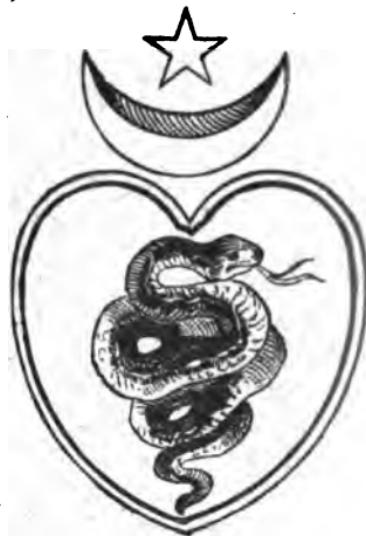












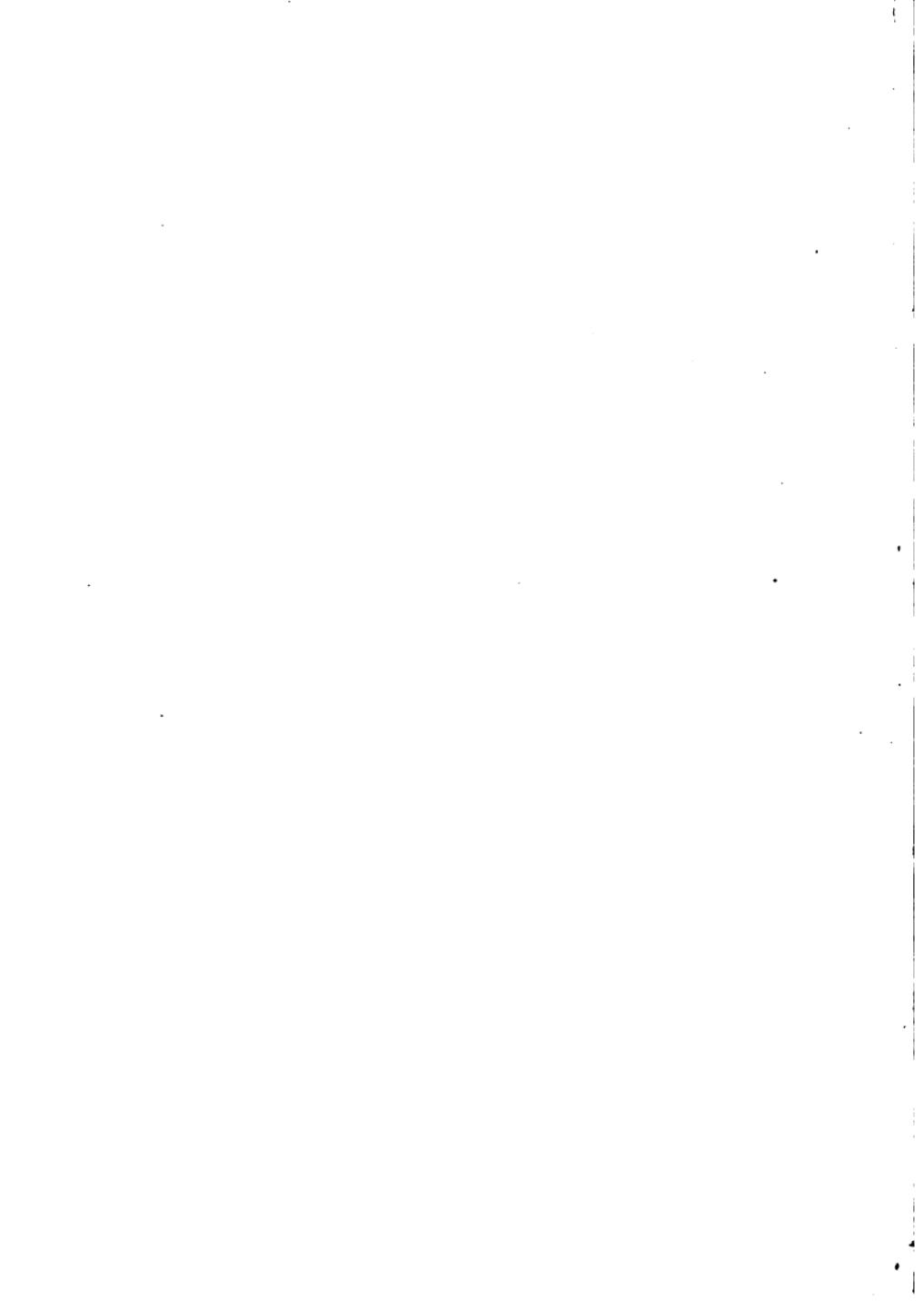
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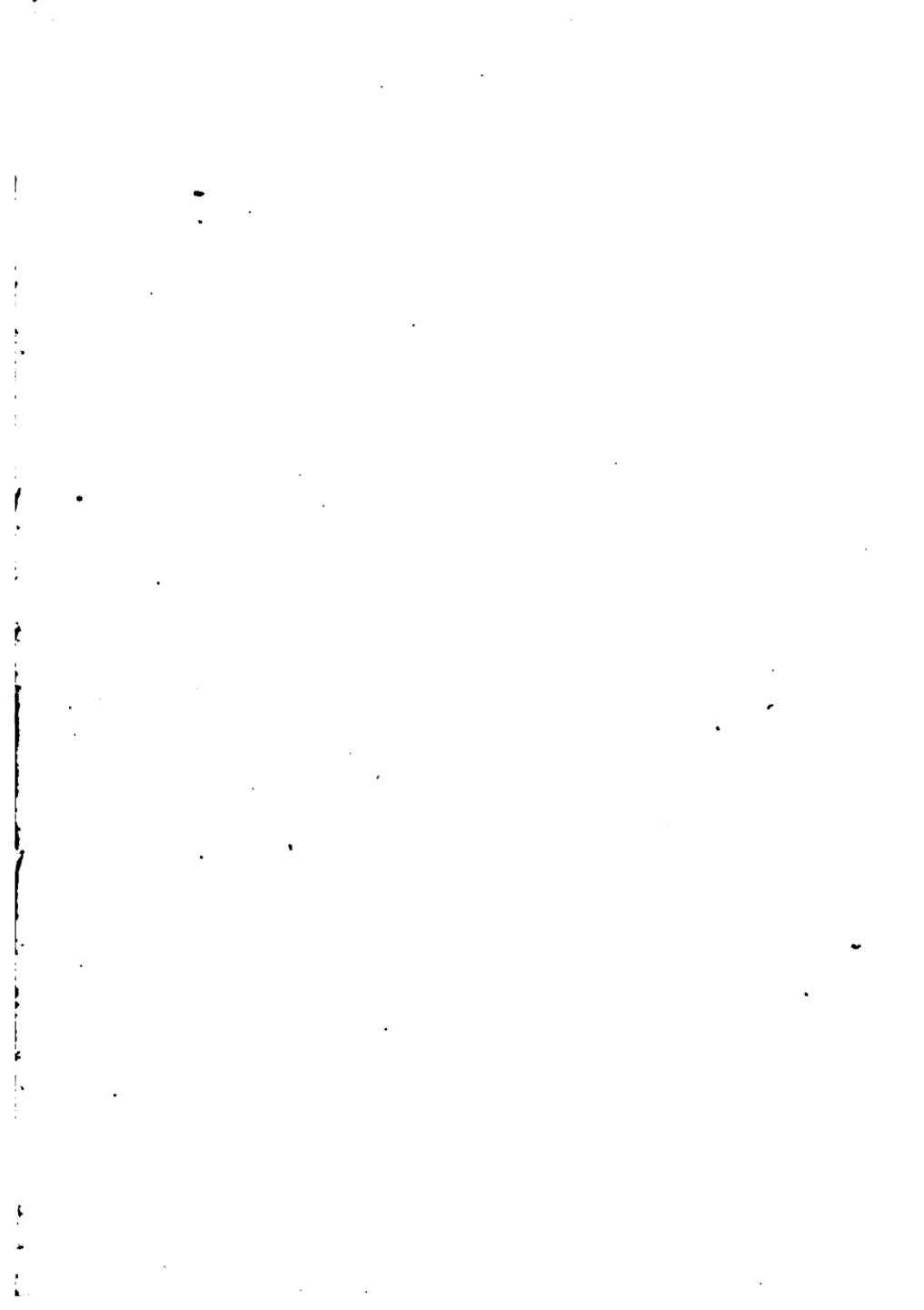
OTHELLO



Edited by

William Winter.





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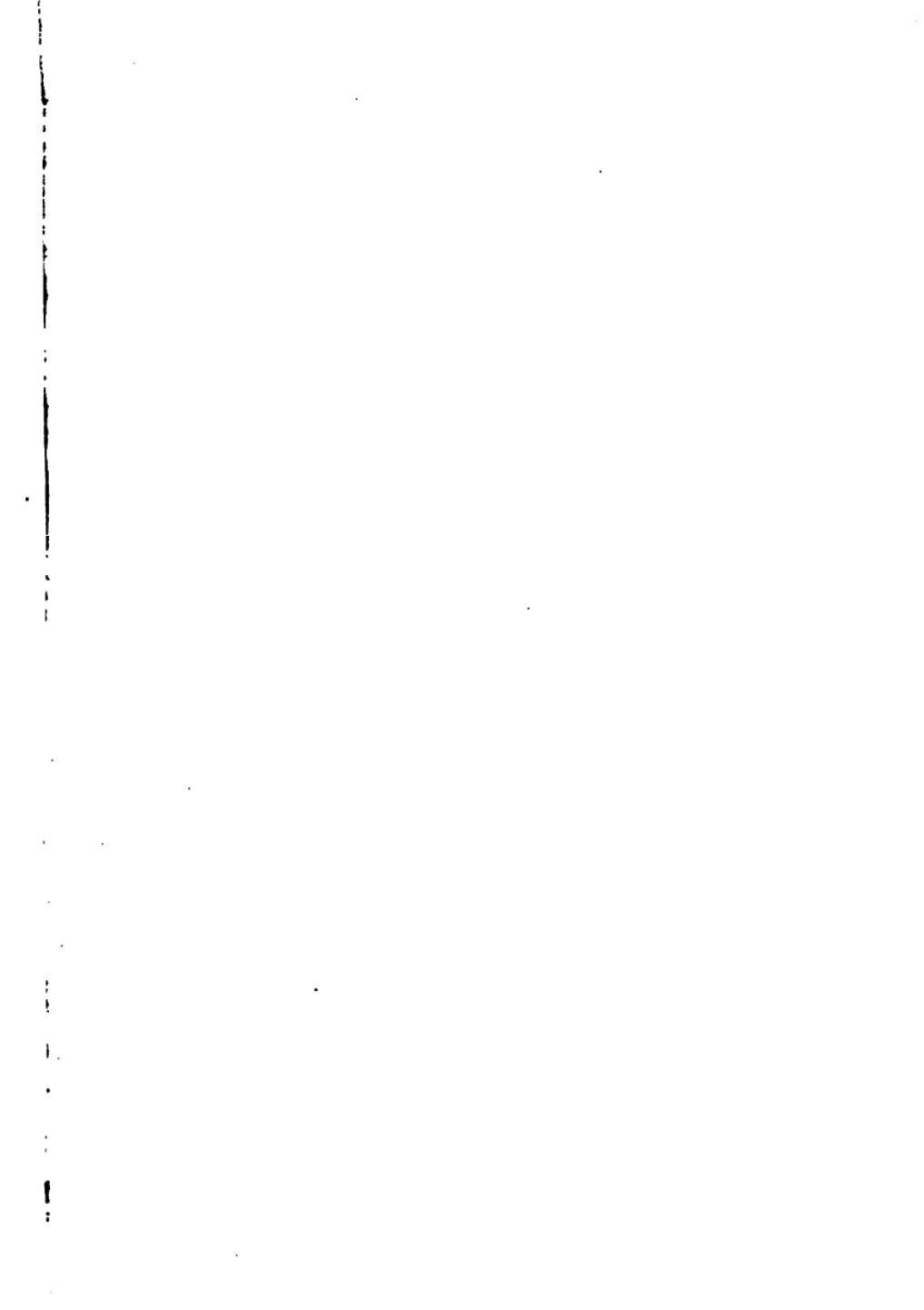
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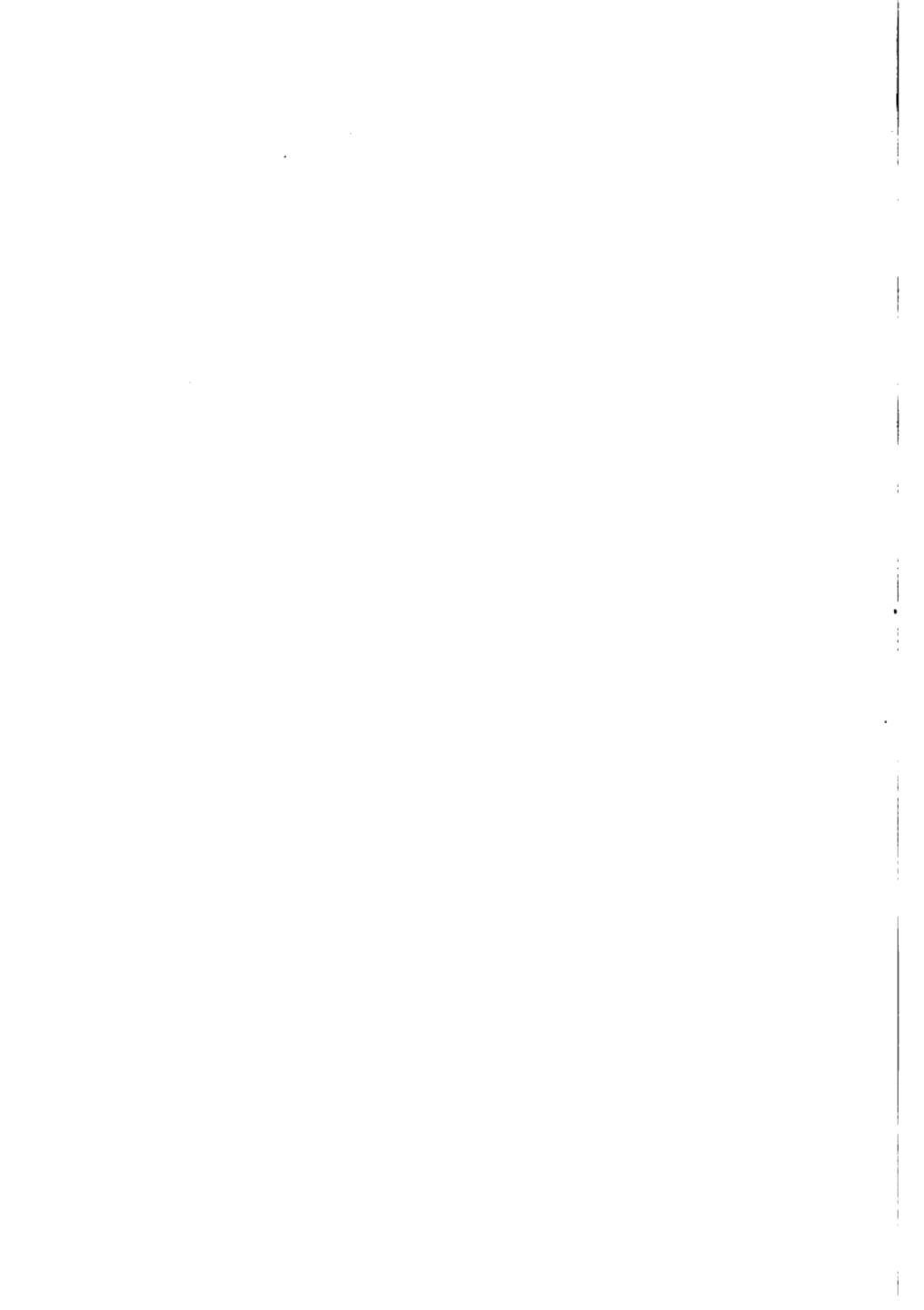
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① *The Prompt-Book.*

Edited by William Winter.



Shakespeare's Tragedy

of

Othello

As Presented by

Edwin Booth.



"The man commands like a full soldier."

"The Moor is of a free and open nature."

*"My parts, my title, and my perfect soul
Shall manifest me rightly."*

*"Not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate."*

*"She's gone; I am abused; and my relief
Must be to loathe her."*

*"My heart is turned to stone;
I strike it and it hurts my hand."*

"Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell."

"It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul."

*"Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail."*

"Look on the tragic loading of this bed."



New-York:

*Printed, for William Winter, by
Francis Hart & Company, 63 and 65 Murray Street.
1878.*

11435, 24

1878. Oct. 2.

Second Series

vol. 34

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Preface.



THE action, passion, variety and pathos of "Othello" are wonderful in their wealth, and in their sympathetic quality; and dramatic genius will always find ample scope for its expression, in the Moor's lofty magnanimity and subsequent terrible anguish, and in Iago's concentrated, wily, diabolical intellect. Yet the total effect of the tragedy is hard, unrelieved, harrowing pain. Other great tragedies of Shakespeare may, indeed, saturate the observant mind with a tearful sense of desolation; but the feeling they leave, at last, is always exalted, and sometimes is sublime. "Othello," on the contrary, burdens the soul with unmitigated agony, and crushes it with a cruel, bitter sense of all that is wicked and hideous in possible human nature and conduct. Its subject is the darkest and most miserable that is known to humanity; and respecting that subject it displays the entire and unvarnished truth. The work, however, was needful to the completeness of Shakespeare's transcript of mankind; and—writing it without disguises—he has given voice to the greatest elemental passions that agitate the human race: and this he has done with a skilfulness of combination, a power of directness and simplicity, and a splendour of language which are invincible. For these reasons, "Othello," notwithstanding it covers our hearts with a pall, must always maintain its place at the head of the acted drama. It is the

foremost, the widest, the deepest, and the best existing analysis and picture, in all literature, of the passions of love and jealousy. It holds, indeed, the mirror up to nature. There is something awfully bleak in the clear atmosphere of truth that Shakespeare has herein shed upon the supreme ecstasy of happiness and the vileness and darkness of sensuality, mischief and murder. His eyes see everything; his thought comprehends all; his words take no gloss, but burn with the white fire of honesty. So clear has he been in his execution,—so accurate in mechanism and so terse and well-knit in style,—that, in adapting “Othello” for even the impatient and decorous stage of to-day, but little of its text needs to be cut, either to accelerate its movement or to soften its grossness. The present version, which gives the text as used by Edwin Booth, and as illustrated by his stage-business, will be found to differ somewhat from other stage-copies of the piece; to present certain novel features of treatment, which are thought to be improvements; and to be a full, adequate, correct, and satisfactory practical presentation of Shakespeare’s magnificent work. The text of Charles Knight’s standard edition, which is based on the Folio of 1623, has, with but little exception, been herein followed. Certain expatiative lines, and certain explanatory and reiterative passages—particularly in the Fourth Act—have been omitted. It has been thought best, because most direct and expeditious, to make the assassination of Cassio a subject of verbal and immediate agreement between Iago and Roderigo, and not to view it as a subject of epistolary discussion. The scene of the Willow Song, not usually acted, has been restored—in a condensed form. Those portions of the text which cannot, and should not, be spoken, have been either lopped away or suitably changed. The name of Paulo has been given to a Senator who participates in the colloquy that precedes the

scene of the Council. *Bianca and the Clown* have been expunged. The hateful passages of Act Fourth, in which Iago still further poisons the already jealous mind of Othello, by making him overhear and misconstrue Cassio's talk of Bianca, were long ago found, in the representation, to be needless and tedious; and they are, accordingly, omitted. The sum of the excisions is about nine hundred lines. In the Appendix will be found a mass of commentary upon the tragedy,—much condensed,—which, it is hoped, the student will find useful. "Othello" was first acted in 1602, by the dramatic company from the Blackfriars and Globe, before Queen Elizabeth and her court, at Harefield; and Burbage was the original representative of the Moor. In more recent time the character of Othello has become greatly and inseparably associated with the names of Edmund Kean, Edwin Forrest, and Thomas Salvini.

W. W.

New-York, June 27th, 1878.





*"Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto : Shylock and the Moor
And Pierre can not be swept or torn away —
The key-stones of the arch ! though all were o'er,
For us re-peopled were the solitary shore."* —LORD BYRON.

“*Othello rages.*” —THOMSON.

“*T is an old tale, and often told.*” —SCOTT.

*“Who, lonely in the midnight tent,
Gazed on the watch-fires in the sleepless air,
Nor chose one star amidst the clustering hosts,
To bless it in the name of some fair face,
Set in his spirit as that star in heaven ?”* —BULWER.

“*Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.*” —MILTON.

*“Beautiful as sweet,
And young as beautiful ! and soft as young !
And gay as soft ! and innocent as gay !”* —YOUNG.

“*The gentle lady married to the Moor.*” —WORDSWORTH.

*“I love thee, love thee, love thee !
Through good and ill, through weal and woe, I love thee !
Not on God's altar, in any time or clime,
Burned there a holier fire than burneth now
Within my spirit for thee.”* —POE.

*“But whispering tongues can poison truth * * *
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.”* —COLERIDGE.

“*Fold her white vesture — snow on snow —
And lay her where the violets blow.*” —HOLMES.

*“Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood.”* —DRYDEN.

“*Cold, cold as those that lived and loved
A thousand years ago.*” —MATTHEW ARNOLD.





*"I must be found :
My parts, my title, and my perfect soul,
Shall manifest me rightly."*

*"A maiden never bold ;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blushed at herself."*

*"I saw Othello's visage in his mind ;
And to his honours and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate."*

*"No, Iago ;
I'll see before I doubt ; when I doubt, prove ;
And, on the proof, there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love, or jealousy !"*

*"But, O ! what damned minutes tells he o'er,
Who dotes, yet doubts ; suspects, yet strongly loves !"*

*"Now do I see, 't is true.—Look here, Iago ;
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven :
'T is gone."*

*"But, alas ! to make me
A fixed figure for the time of scorn
To point his slow, unmoving finger at !"*

*"Unkindness may do much ;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love."*

*"One more, and that 's the last :
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears : this sorrow 's heavenly :
It strikes where it doth love."*

*"Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight !
Blow me about in winds ! roast me in sulphur !
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire !—
O, Desdemona ! Desdemona !"*



Persons Represented.



DUKE OF VENICE.

BRABANTIO, *a Venetian Senator.*

GRATIANO, *Brother to Brabantio.*

LODOVICO, *Kinsman to Brabantio.*

OTHELLO, *a noble Moor: General in the Venetian Service.*

CASSIO, *his Lieutenant.*

IAGO, *his Ancient.*

RODERIGO, *a Venetian Gentleman.*

MONTANO, *former Commander in Cyprus.*

PAULO.

A HERALD.

DESDEMONA, *Daughter to Brabantio, and Wife to Othello.*

EMILIA, *Wife to Iago.*

SENATORS, OFFICERS, GENTLEMEN, MESSENGERS, SAILORS
and ATTENDANTS.

Place and Time.



SCENE.—*For Act First, Venice: for the succeeding Acts, a sea-port town—Famagusta—in the Island of Cyprus.*

PERIOD.—*The latter part of the Sixteenth Century [1570].*

TIME OF ACTION.—*For Act First, one night; then an interval for journey from Venice to Cyprus; then, for Act Second, one night; then, for Acts Third, Fourth and Fifth, perhaps three or four days, perhaps longer: indeterminate. See Appendix, Sec. V.*

OTHELLO.



Act First.

Scene First.—VENICE. A DARK STREET. FULL STAGE.

[Enter Roderigo and Iago.

Rod.

Never tell me; I take it much unkindly
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

Iago.

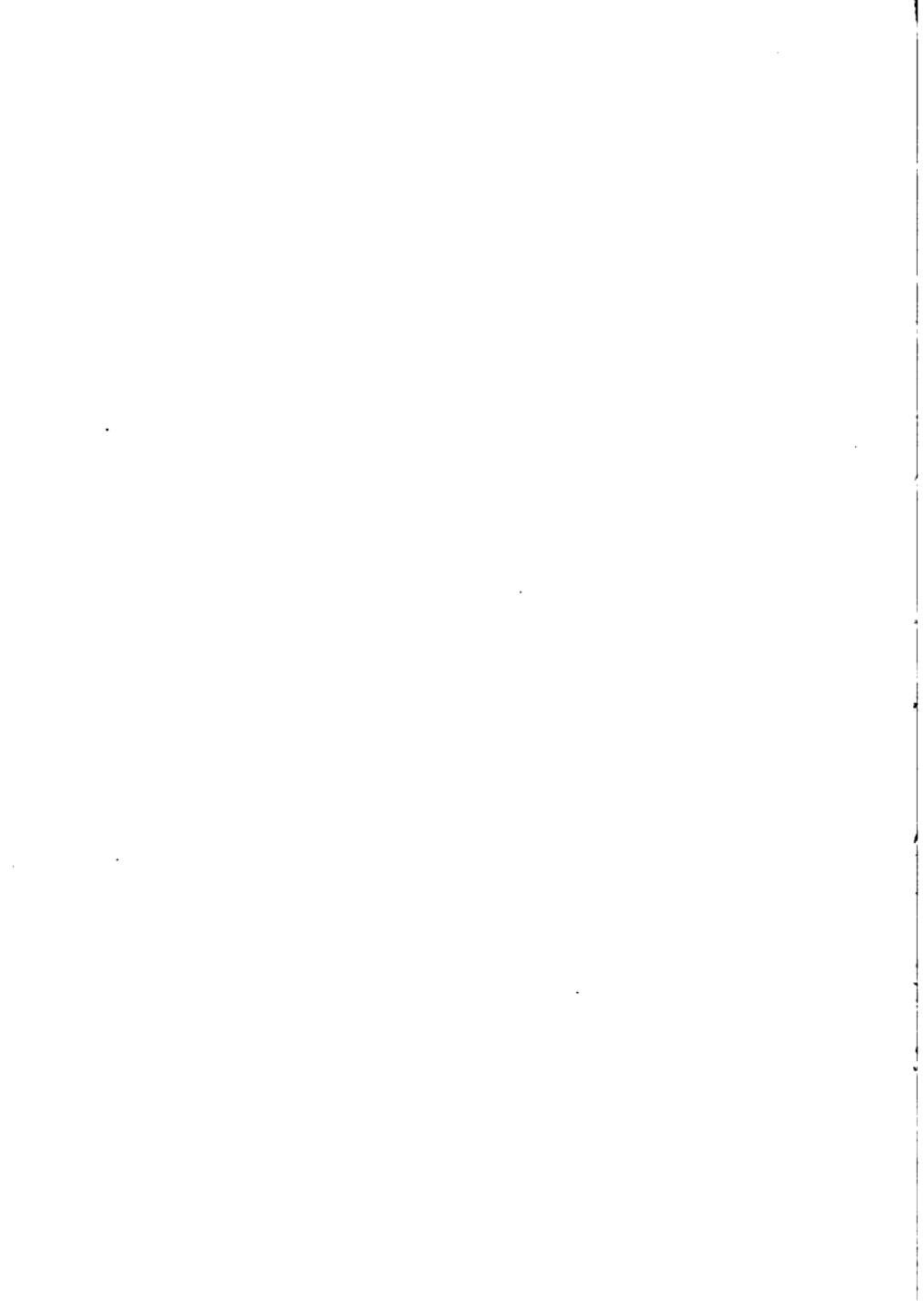
'Sblood, but you will not hear me:—
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

Rod.

Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.

Iago.

Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Off-capped to him:—and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:—
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them, with a bombast circumstance,
Horribly stuffed with epithets of war;
And, in conclusion,
Nonsuits my mediators: for, “certes,” says he,
“I have already chose my officer.”
And what was he?
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,



One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
 A fellow
 That never set a squadron in the field,
 Nor the division of a battle knows
 More than a spinster :
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
 And I, sir (bless the mark !), his Moorship's ancient.

Rod.

By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

Iago.

Now, sir, be judge yourself,
 Whether I in any just term am affined
 To love the Moor.

Rod.

I would not follow him, then.

Iago.

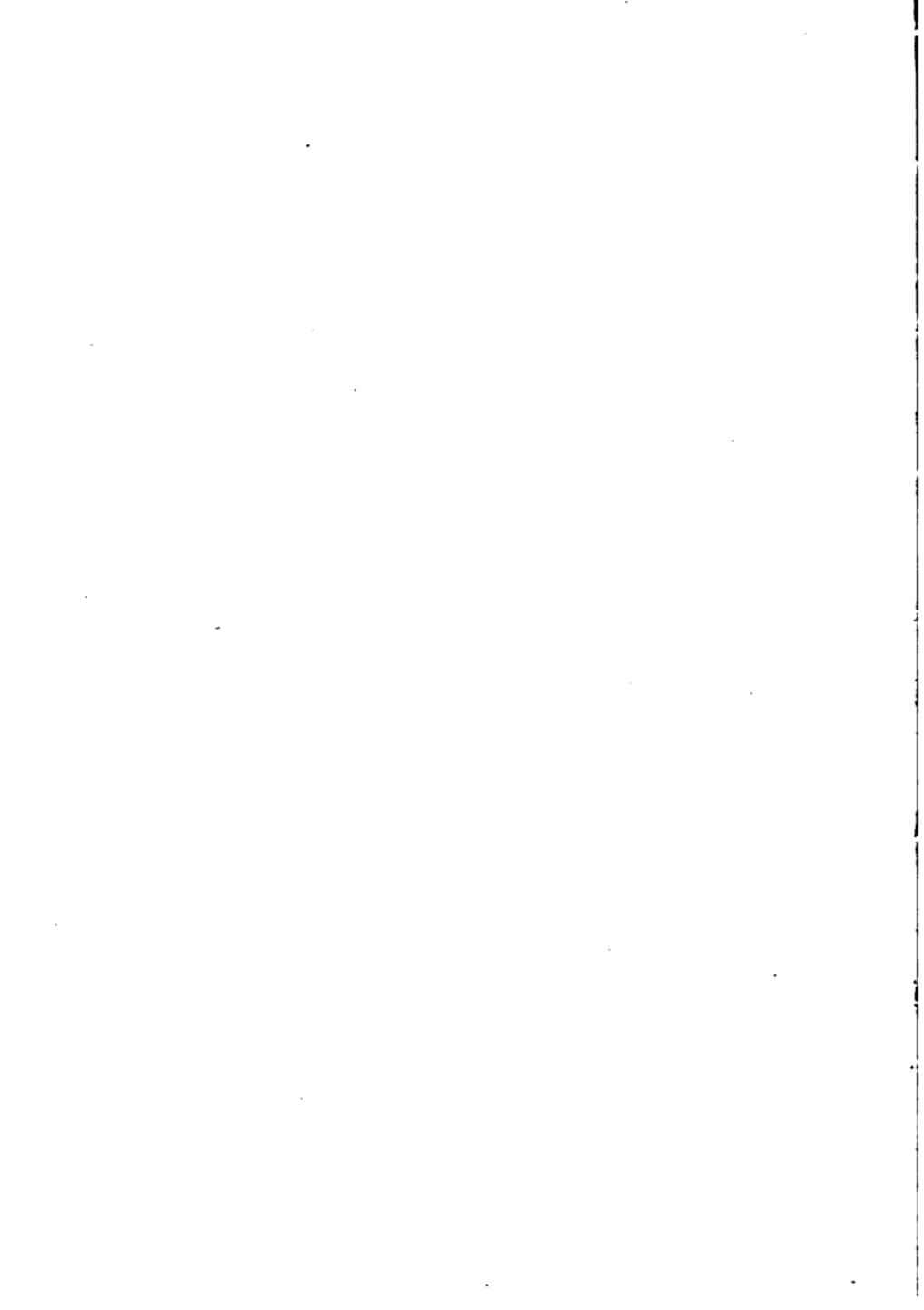
O, sir, content you ;
 I follow him to serve my turn upon him :
 Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
 But seeming so, for my peculiar end :
 For when my outward action doth demonstrate
 The native act and figure of my heart
 In compliment extern, 't is not long after
 But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
 For daws to peck at : I am not what I am.

Rod.

What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe
 If he can carry 't thus !

Iago.

Call up her father,
 Rouse him :—make after him, poison his delight ;
 Though that his joy be joy,
 Yet throw such changes of vexation on 't,
 As it may lose some colour.



Rod.

Here is her father's house; I 'll call aloud.

Iago.

Do; with like timorous accent and dire yell
As when, by night and negligence, the fire
Is spied in populous cities.

Rod.

What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

Iago.

Awake! what, ho, Brabantio! thieves! thieves! thieves!
Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!
Thieves! thieves!

[*Brabantio appears above, at a window.*

Bra.

What is the reason of this terrible summons?
What is the matter there?

Rod.

Signior, is all your family within?

Iago.

Are your doors locked?

Bra.

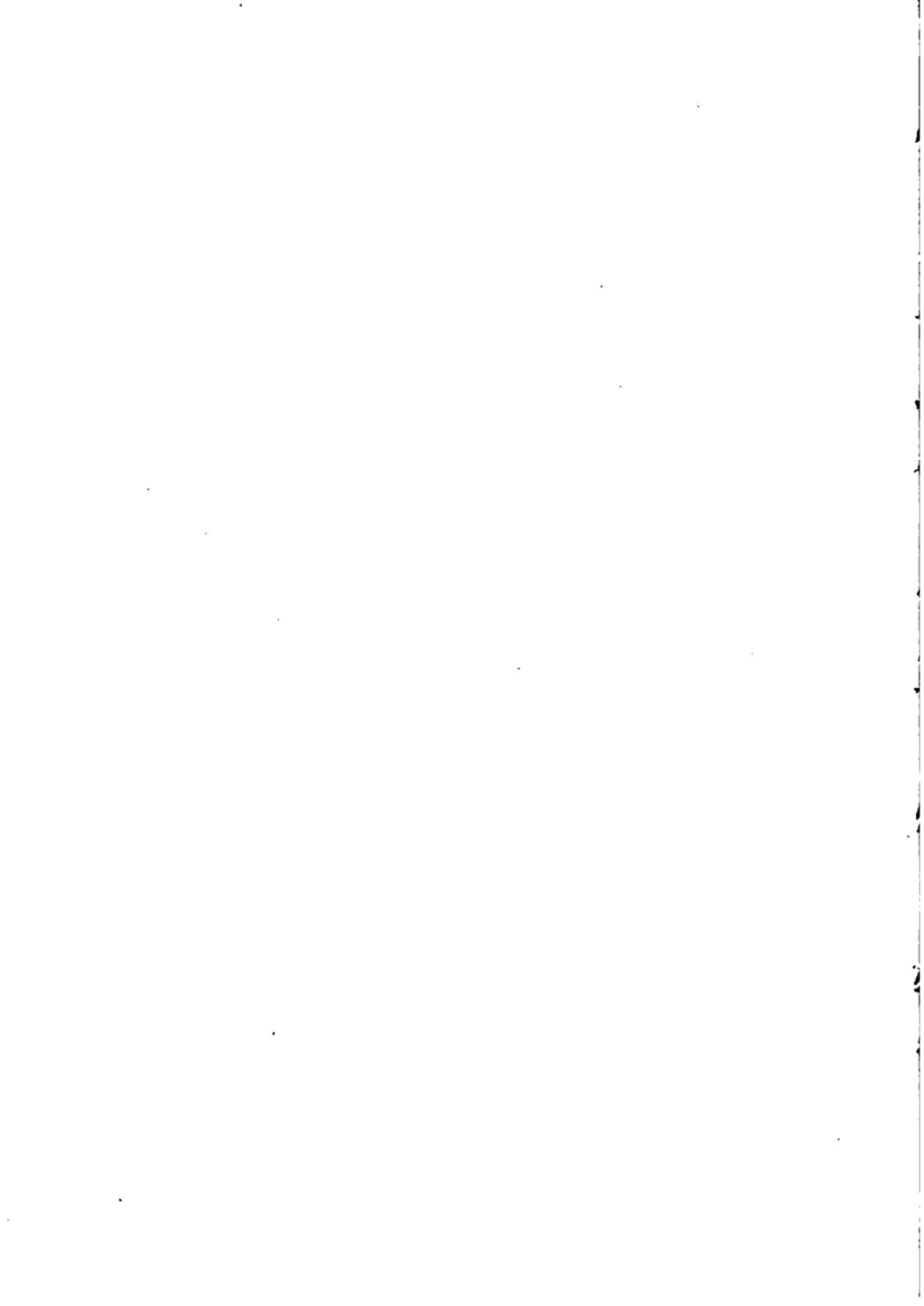
Why, wherefore ask you this?

Iago.

Sir, you 're robbed;
You have lost half your soul;
Arise, arise;
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell—
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.

Bra.

What! have you lost your wits?



Rod.

Most reverend signior, do you know my voice ?

Bra.

Not I : what are you ?

Rod.

My name is Roderigo.

Bra.

The worser welcome :

I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors :
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say
My daughter is not for thee ; and now, in madness,
Being full of supper and distempering draughts,
Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come
To start my quiet.

Rod.

Sir, sir, sir —

Bra.

But thou must needs be sure
My spirit and my place have in them power
To make this bitter to thee.

Rod.

Patience, good sir.

Bra.

What tell'st thou me of robbing ? this is Venice ;
My house is not a grange.

Rod.

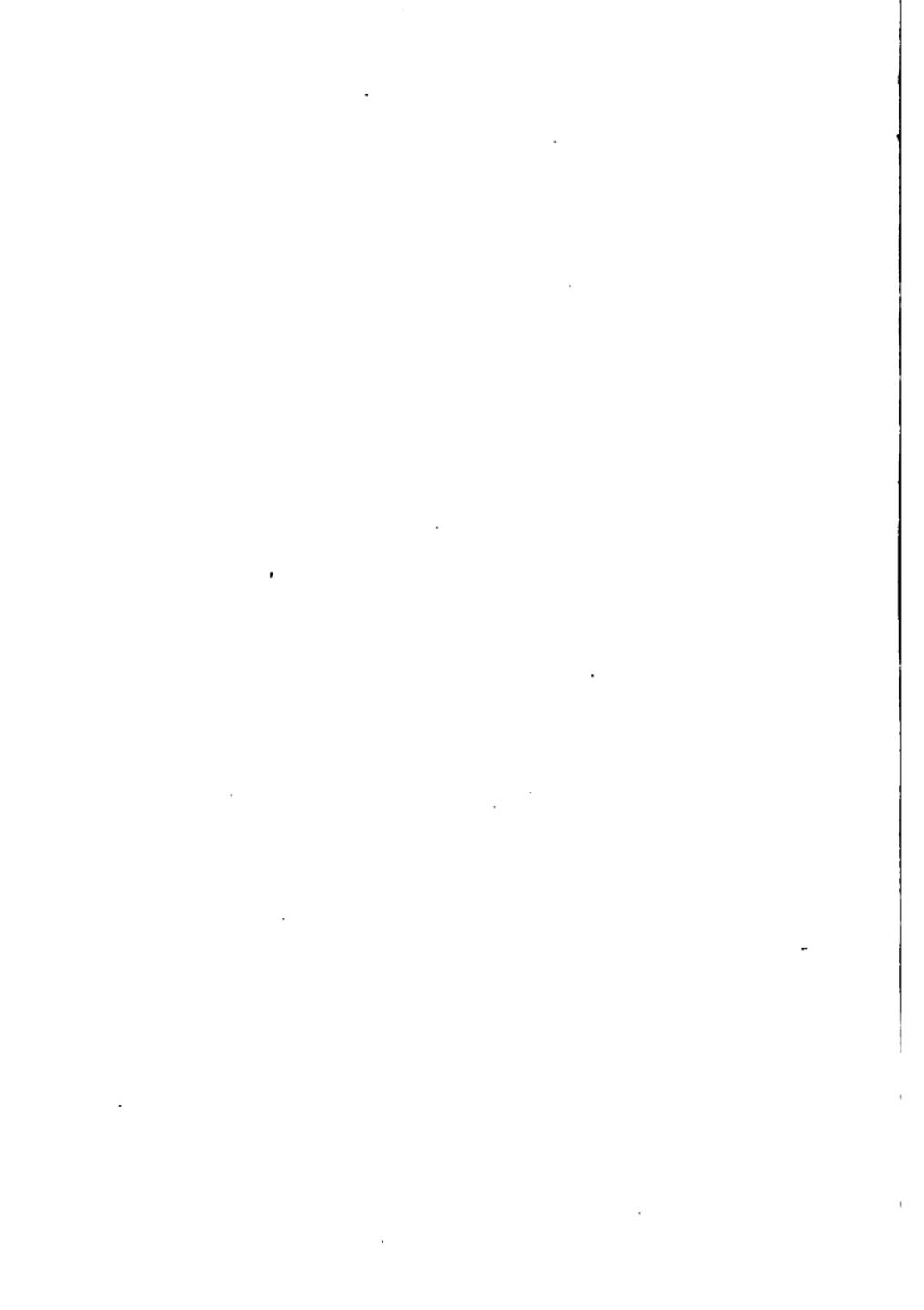
Most grave Brabantio,
In simple and pure soul I come to you.

Iago.

Sir, you are one of those that will not serve God, if the devil bid you.

Bra.

What profane wretch art thou ?



Iago.

I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter is with the Moor.

Bra.

Thou art a villain.

Iago.

You are — a senator.

Bra.

This thou shalt answer ; I know thee, Roderigo.

Rod.

Sir, I will answer anything. But, I beseech you,
Straight satisfy yourself.

If she be in her chamber or your house,
Let loose on me the justice of the state
For thus deluding you.

Bra.

This accident is not unlike my dream ;
Belief of it oppresses me already.—

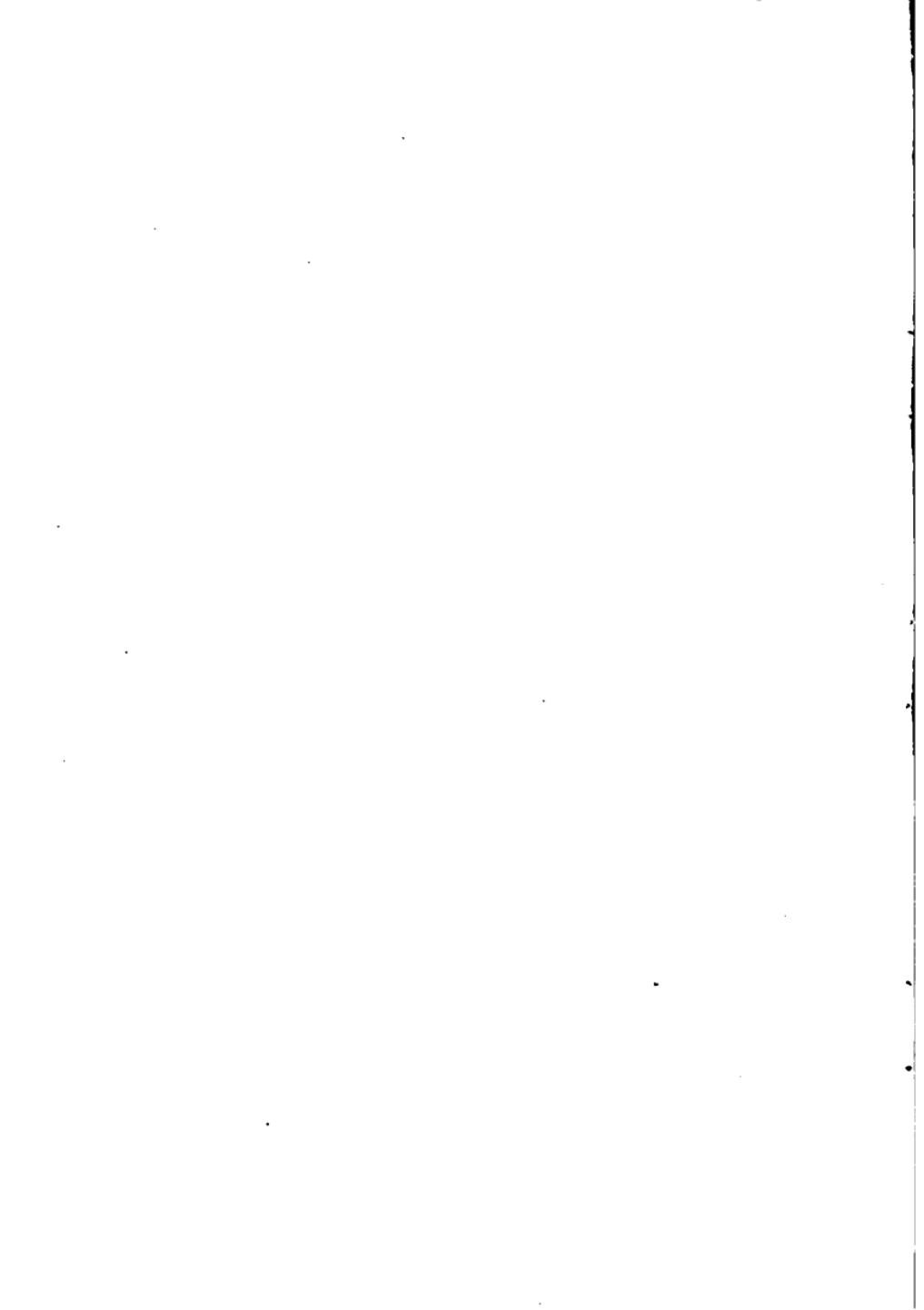
Light, I say ! light !

[*Exit above.*

Iago.

[*To Roderigo.*

Farewell ; for I must leave you :
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
To be produced (as, if I stay, I shall)
Against the Moor : for, I do know, the state,—
However this may gall him with some check,—
Cannot with safety cast him ; for he 's embarked
With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars
(Which even now stand in act), that, for their souls,
Another of his fathom they have none,
To lead their business : in which regard,
Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,
Yet, for necessity of present life,
I must show out a flag and sign of love,
Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,



Lead to the Sagittary the raisèd search;
And there will I be with him. So, farewell.

[Exit Iago L.

[Enter, below, Brabantio, and Servants with torches.

Bra.

It is too true an evil: gone she is;
And what's to come of my despisèd time
Is naught but bitterness.—Now, Roderigo,
Where didst thou see her?—O, unhappy girl!—
With the Moor, say'st thou?—Who would be a father?—
How didst thou know 't was she?—O, she deceives me
Past thought!—What said she to you?
Are they married, think you?

Rod.

Truly, I think they are.

Bra.

O, heaven!—How got she out?—O, treason of the
blood!—
Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
By what you see them act.—Are there not charms
By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

Rod.

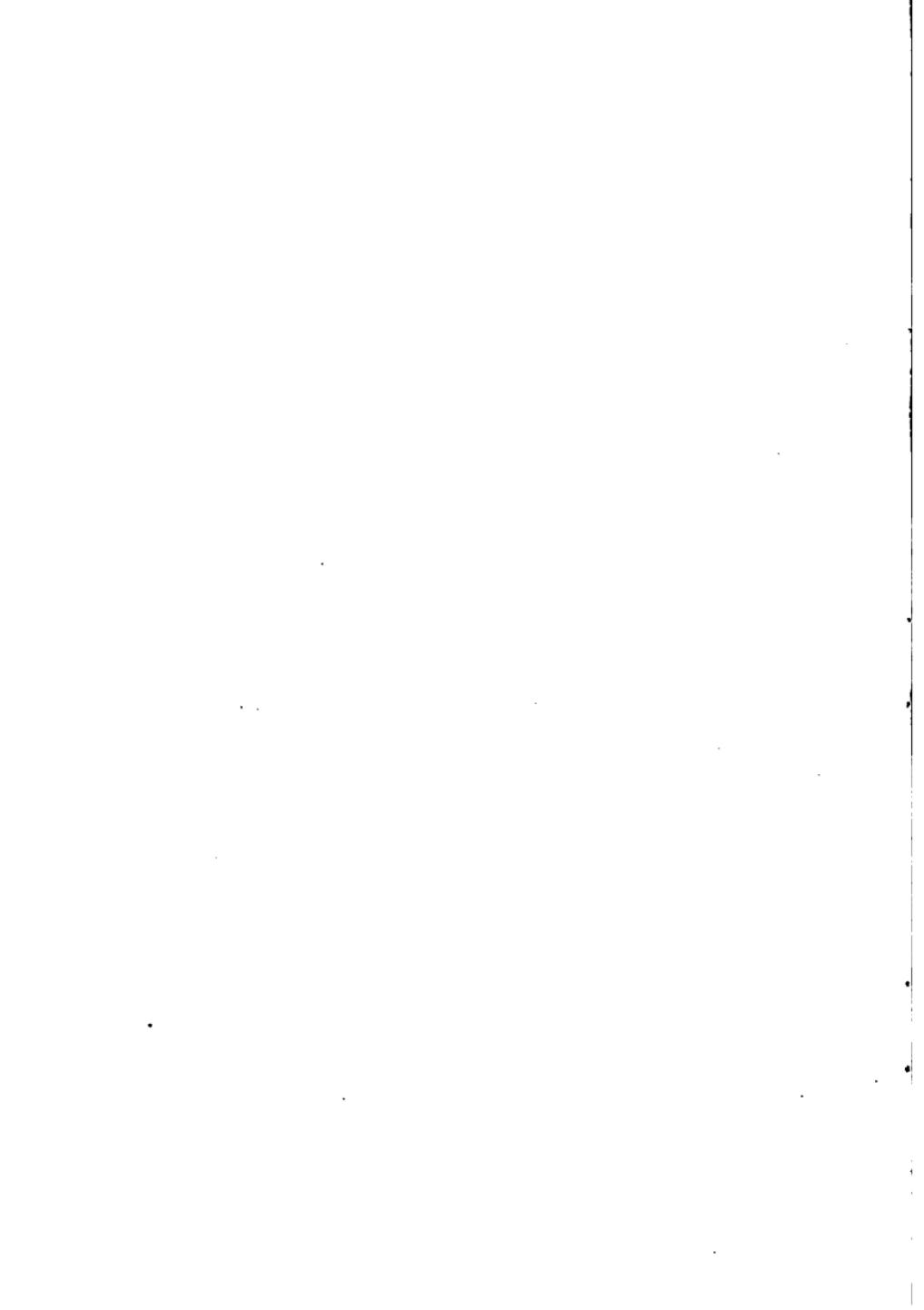
Yes, sir, I have indeed.

Bra.

O, that you had had her!—
Some one way, some another.—Do you know
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

Rod.

I think I can discover them, if you please
To get good guard, and go along with me.



Bra.

Pray you, lead on. At every house I 'll call;
I may command at most.
On, good Roderigo;— I 'll deserve your pains.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene Second. { VENICE. THE SAGITTARY. [SECOND
GROOVES.]

[*Enter Othello and Iago.*

Iago.

Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience
To do no contrived murder: I lack iniquity
Sometimes to do me service: nine or ten times
I had thought to have yerked him here under the ribs.

Oth.

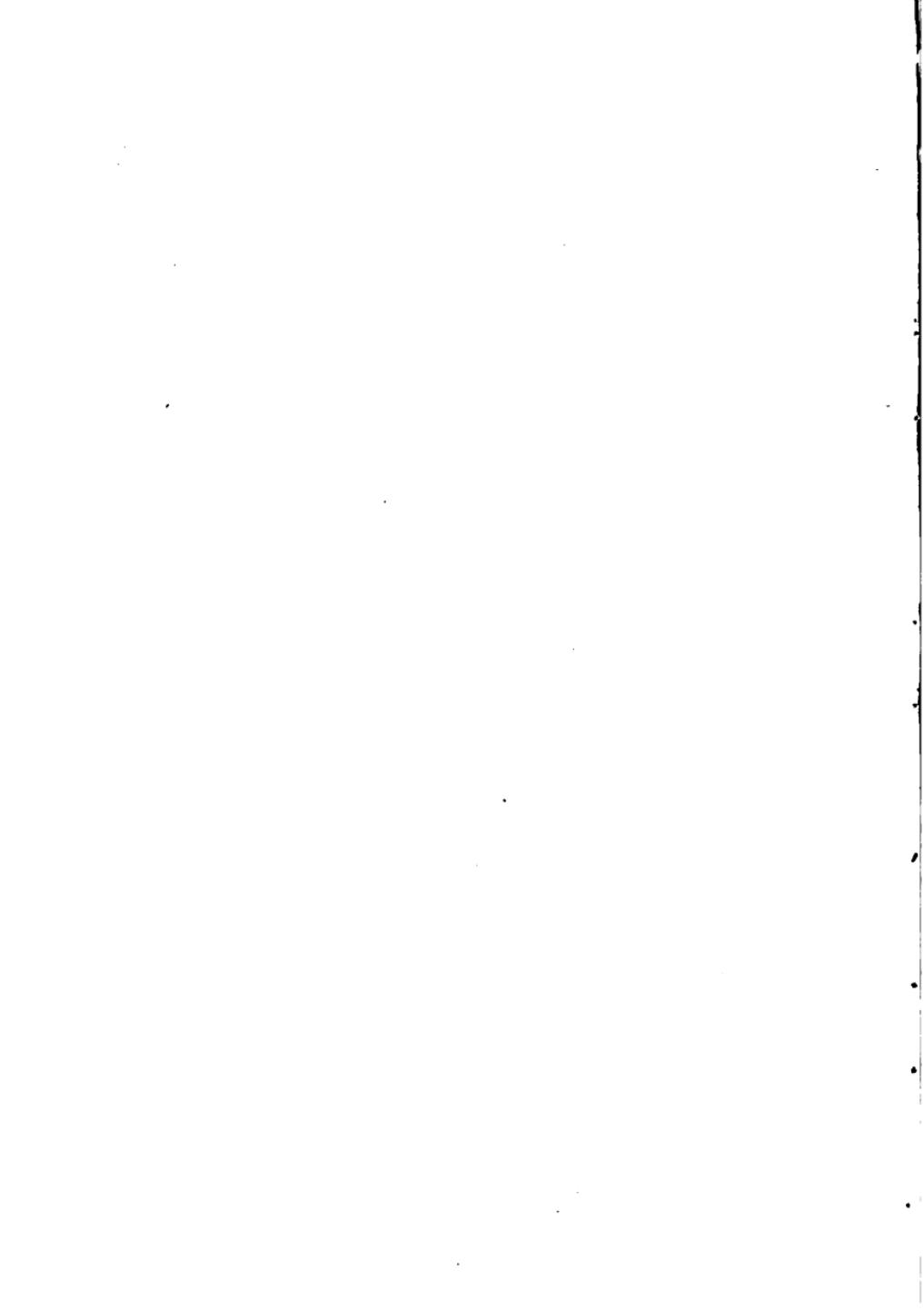
'T is better as it is.

Iago.

Nay, but he prated,
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
Against your honour,
That, with the little godliness I have,
I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray you, sir,
Are you fast married? for be sure of this,
That the magnifico is much beloved;
And hath, in his effect, a voice potential
As double as the duke's: he will divorce you;
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
The law (with all his might to enforce it on)
Will give him cable.

Oth.

Let him do his spite:
My services, which I have done the signiory,
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'T is yet to know,—



Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
 I shall promulgate,— I fetch my life and being
 From men of royal siege; and my demerits
 May speak, unbonneted, to as proud a fortune
 As this that I have reached: for know, Iago,
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
 I would not my unhousèd free condition
 Put into circumscription and confine
 For the sea's worth. But, look! what lights come yonder?

Iago.

Those are the raisèd father and his friends:
 You were best go in.

Oth.

Not I; I must be found:
 My parts, my title, and my perfect soul,
 Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

Iago.

By Janus, I think no.

[Enter Cassio, and Officers with torches.

Oth.

The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant:
 The goodness of the night upon you, friends!
 What is the news?

Cas.

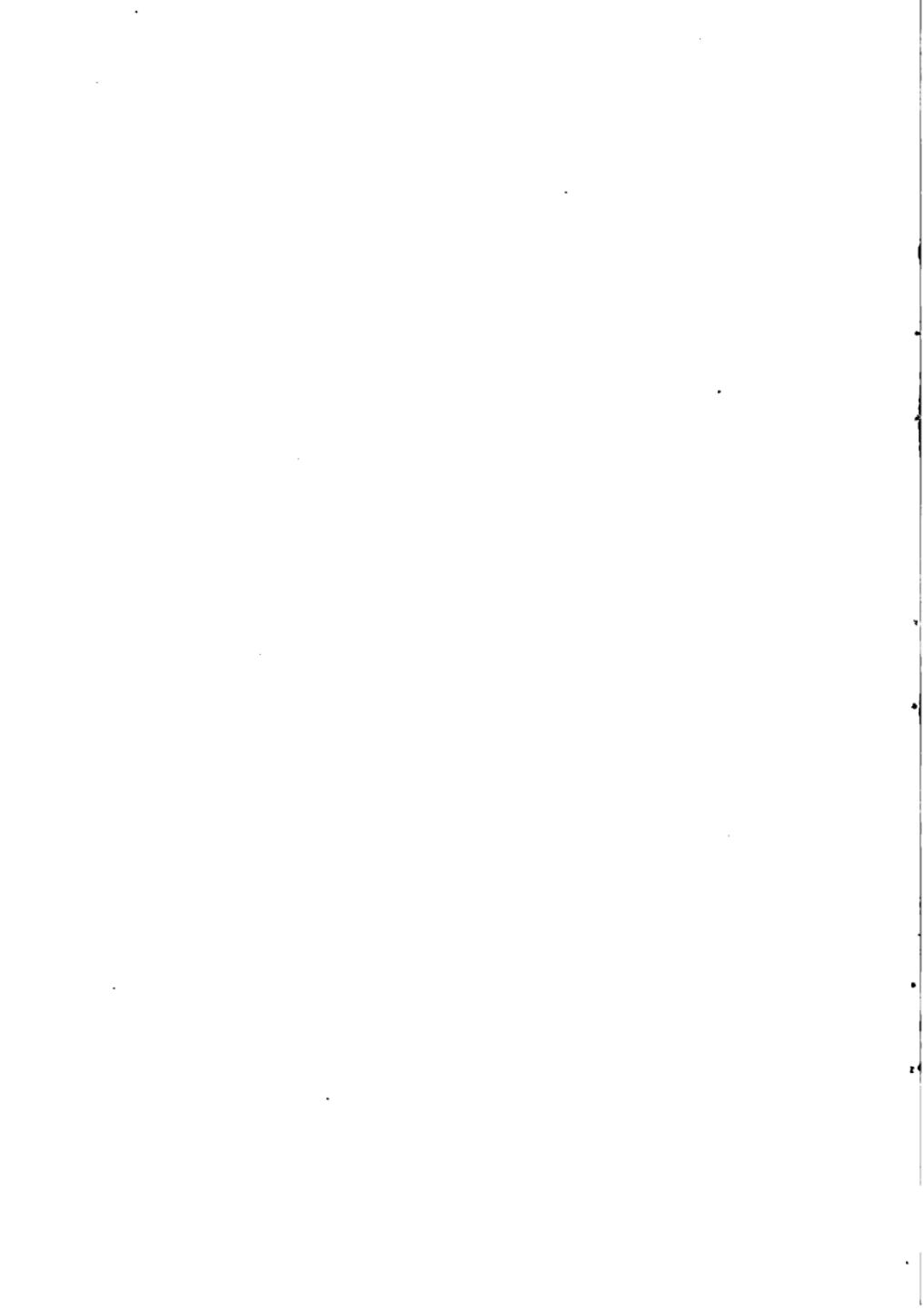
The duke does greet you, general;
 And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,
 Even on the instant.

Oth.

What is the matter, think you?

Cas.

Something from Cyprus, as I may divine:
 It is a business of some heat:
 You have been hotly called for;
 When, being not at your lodging to be found,
 The senate hath sent about three several quests
 To search you out.



Oth.

"T is well I am found by you.
I will but spend a word here in the house,
And go with you.

[*Exit R.**Cas.*

Ancient, what makes he here ?

Iago.

Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carrack :
If it prove lawful prize, he 's made for ever.

Cas.

I do not understand.

Iago.

He 's married.

Cas.

To whom ?

[*Re-enter Othello R.**Iago.*

Marry, to—Come, captain, will you go ?

Oth.

Have with you.

Cas.

Here comes another troop to seek for you.

Iago.

It is Brabantio :—general, be advised ;
He comes to bad intent.

Oth.

Holla ! stand there !

Rod.

Signior, it is the Moor.

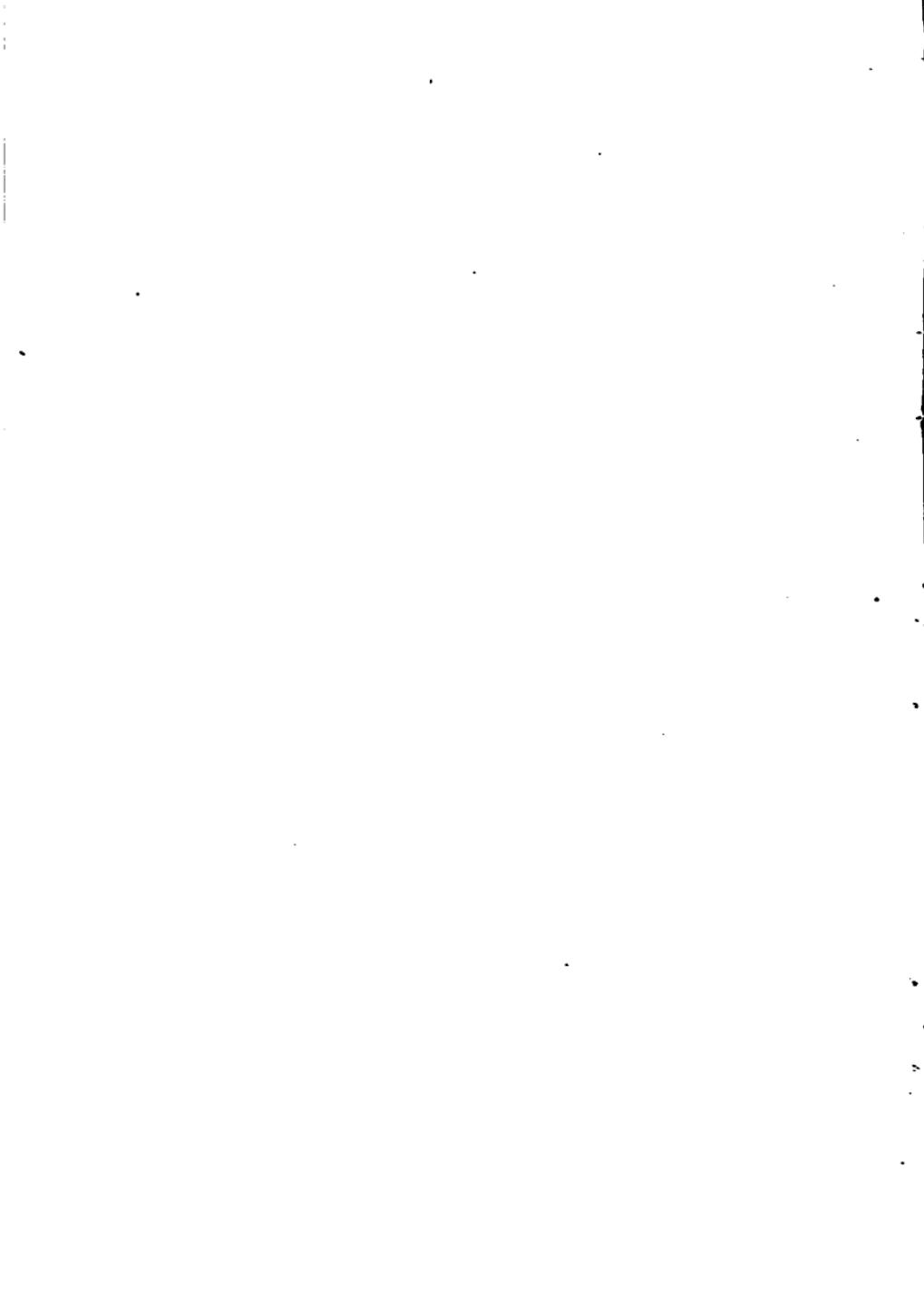
[*Spoken within.*

[*Enter Brabantio, Roderigo, and Officers with torches and weapons.*

Bra.

Down with him, thief !

[*They draw, on both sides.*



Iago.

You, Roderigo ! come, sir, I am for you.

Oth.

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.—
Good signior, you shall more command with years
Than with your weapons.

Bra.

O, thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my daughter ?
Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her ;
For I 'll refer me to all things of sense,
If she in chains of magic were not bound,
Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage, that she shunned
The wealthy curlèd darlings of our nation,
Would ever have, to incur a general mock,
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
Of such a thing as thou,—to fear, not to delight.
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee
For an abuser of the world, a practiser
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.—
Lay hold upon him : if he do resist,
Subdue him at his peril.

Oth.

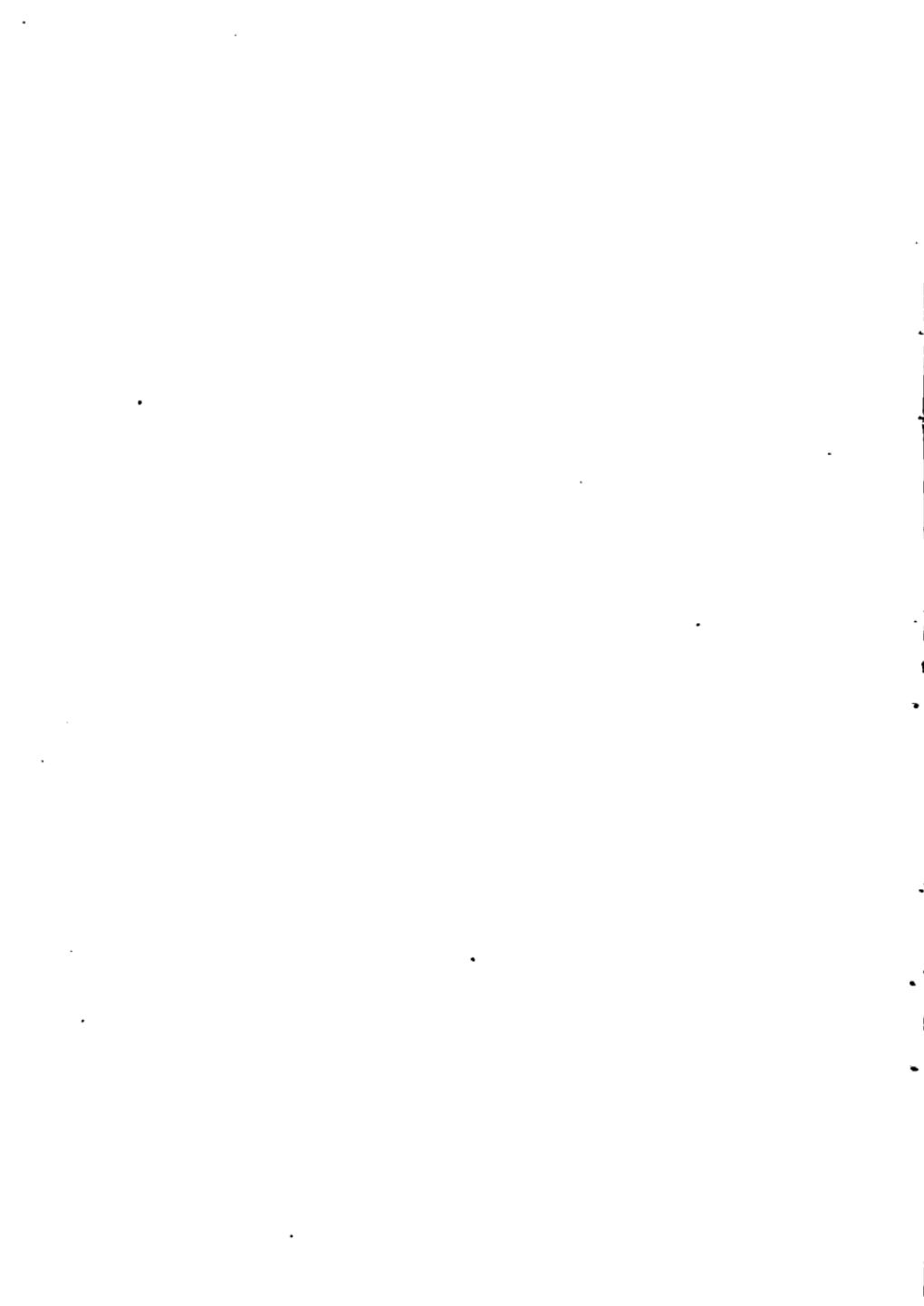
Hold your hands,
Both you of my inclining, and the rest :
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
Without a prompter. Where will you that I go
To answer this your charge ?

Bra.

To prison ; till fit time
Of law, and course of direct session,
Call thee to answer.

Oth.

What if I do obey ?
How may the duke be therewith satisfied,
Whose messengers are here about my side,



Upon some present business of the state
To bring me to him ?

Cas.

'T is true, most worthy signior;
The duke 's in council, and your noble self,
I am sure, is sent for.

Bra.

How ! the duke in council !
In this time of the night ! Bring him away ;
Mine 's not an idle cause : the duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the state,
Cannot but feel this wrong as 't were their own ;
For if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.

[*Exeunt.—Change.*

Scene Third. { ANTE-ROOM OF THE COUNCIL-CHAMBER.
[FIRST GROOVES.]

[*Scene Third is sometimes omitted.*]

[*Enter Gratiano, Lodovico, and Paulo, with papers.*

Grat.

There is no composition in these news
That gives them credit.

Lod.

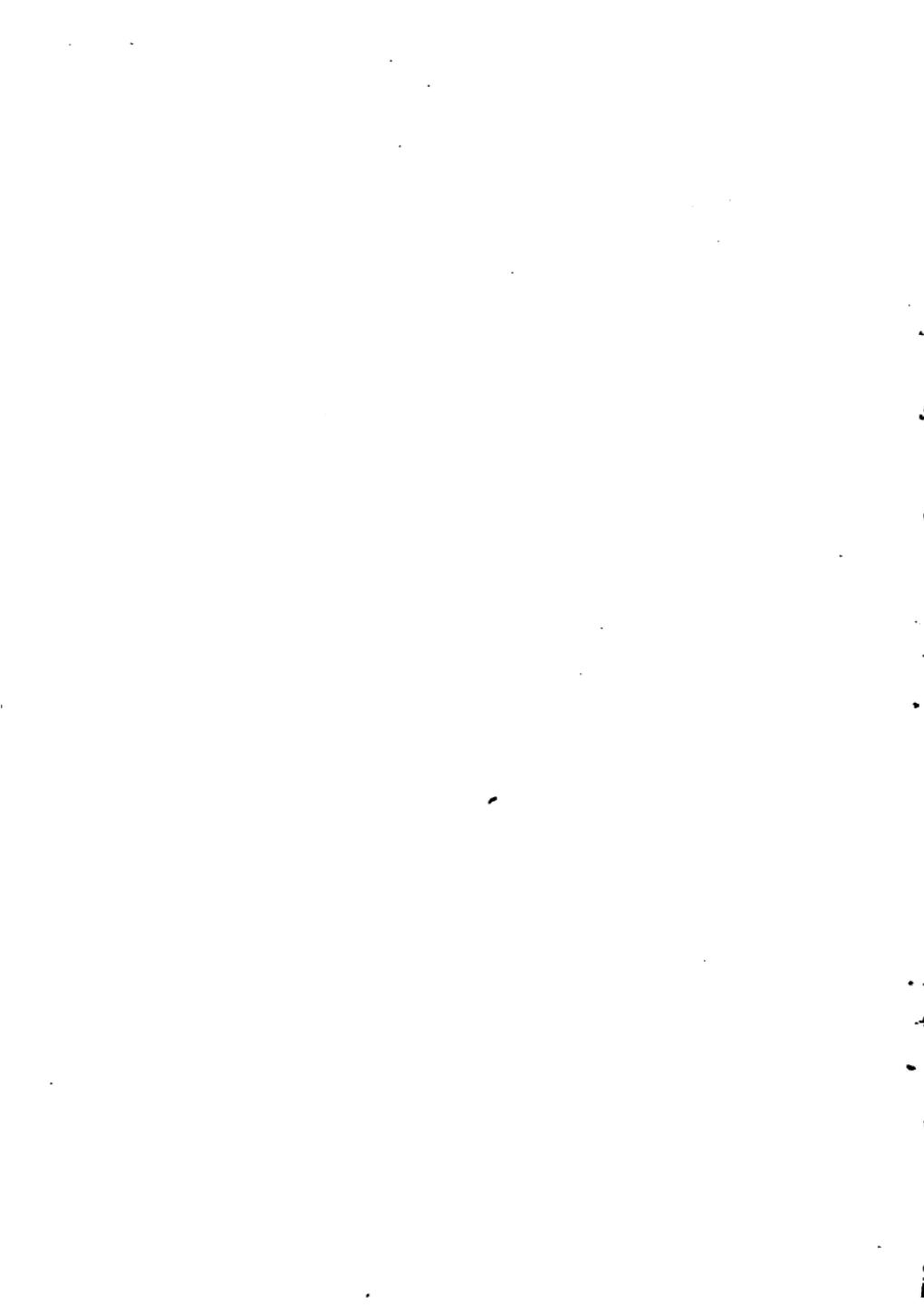
Indeed, they are disproportioned ;
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

Paulo.

And mine, a hundred and forty.

Lod.

And mine, two hundred :
But though they jump not on a just account,—
As in these cases, where the aim reports,



'T is oft with difference,— yet do they all confirm
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

Grat.

Nay, it is possible enough to judgment :
I do not so secure me in the error,
But the main article I do approve
In fearful sense.

Paulo.

A messenger from the galleys. [Enter a Messenger.
Now,—the business ?

Mess.

The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes ;
So was I bid report here to the state
By Signior Montano. [Exit Messenger.

Grat.

How say you by this change ?

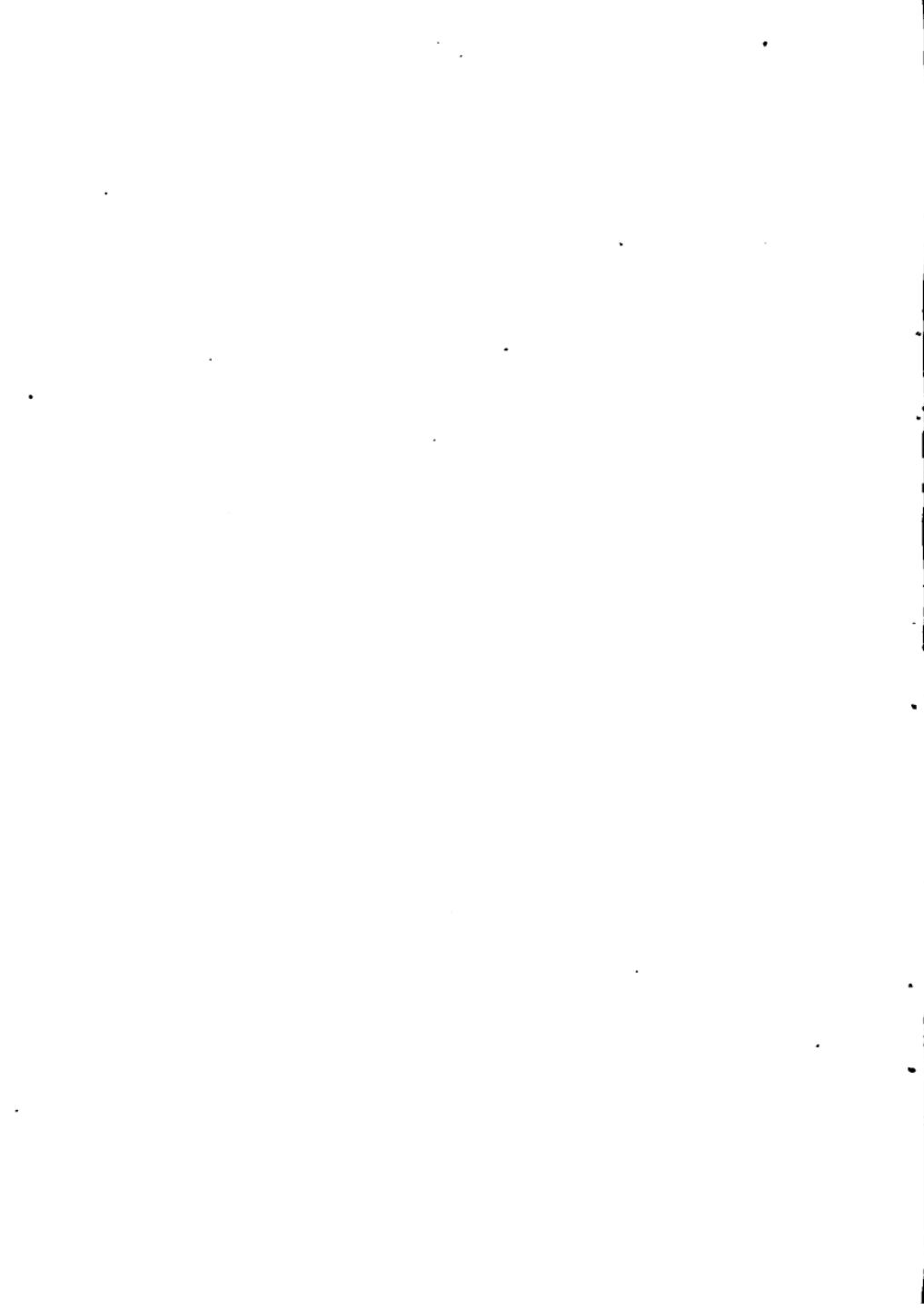
Lod.

This cannot be,
By no assay of reason ; 't is a pageant,
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider
The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk ;
And let ourselves again but understand,
That as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
So may he with more facile question bear it,
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,
But altogether lacks the abilities
That Rhodes is dressed in :— if we make thought of this,
We must not think the Turk is so unskilful
To leave that latest which concerns him first,
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain,
To wake and wage a danger profitless.

Grat.

Nay, in all confidence, he 's not for Rhodes.

[*Exeunt.— Change.*



Scene Fourth.

THE COUNCIL-CHAMBER. THE DUKE OF VENICE AND THE SENATORS ARE DISCOVERED R., WITH A MESSENGER WHO IS KNEELING BEFORE THEM. ENTER, AS THE SCENE OPENS, GRATIANO, LODOVICO, AND PAULO.

Mess.

The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course toward the Isle of Rhodes,
Have there injoined them with an after fleet.

Duke.

Ay, so I thought.—How many, as you guess?

Mess.

Of thirty sail: and now they do re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus.—Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.

Duke.

'T is certain, then, for Cyprus.—

Grat.

Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

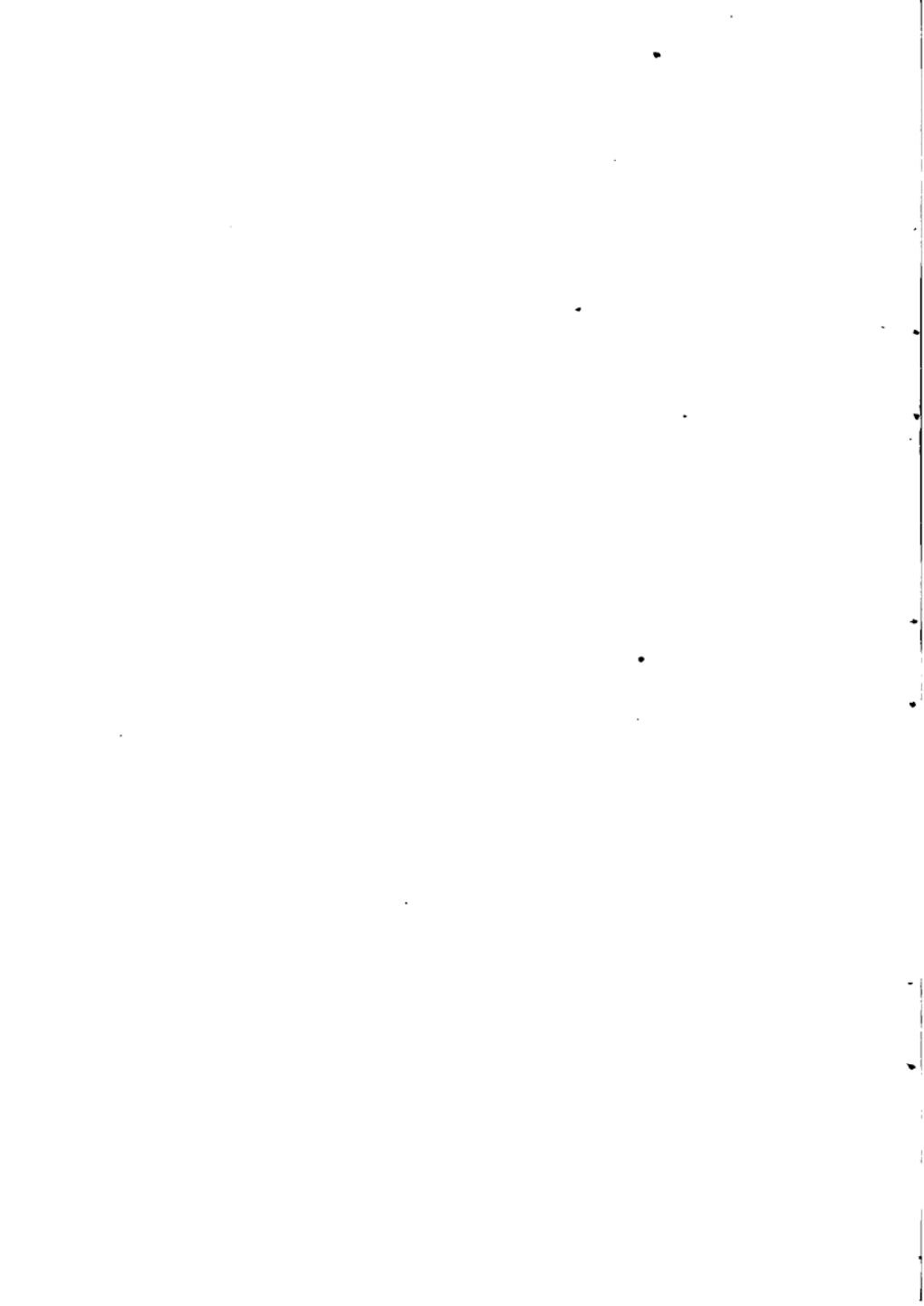
[Enter Brabantio, Othello, Cassio, Iago, Roderigo,
and Officers.

Duke.

Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.—
I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;

We lacked your counsel and your help to-night.

[To Brabantio.



Bra.

So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me ;
 Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business,
 Hath raised me from my bed ; nor doth the general care
 Take hold of me ; for my particular grief
 Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature
 That it engluts and swallows other sorrows,
 And it is still itself.

Duke.

Why, what's the matter ?

Bra.

My daughter ! O, my daughter !

Duke and Senators.

Dead ?

Bra.

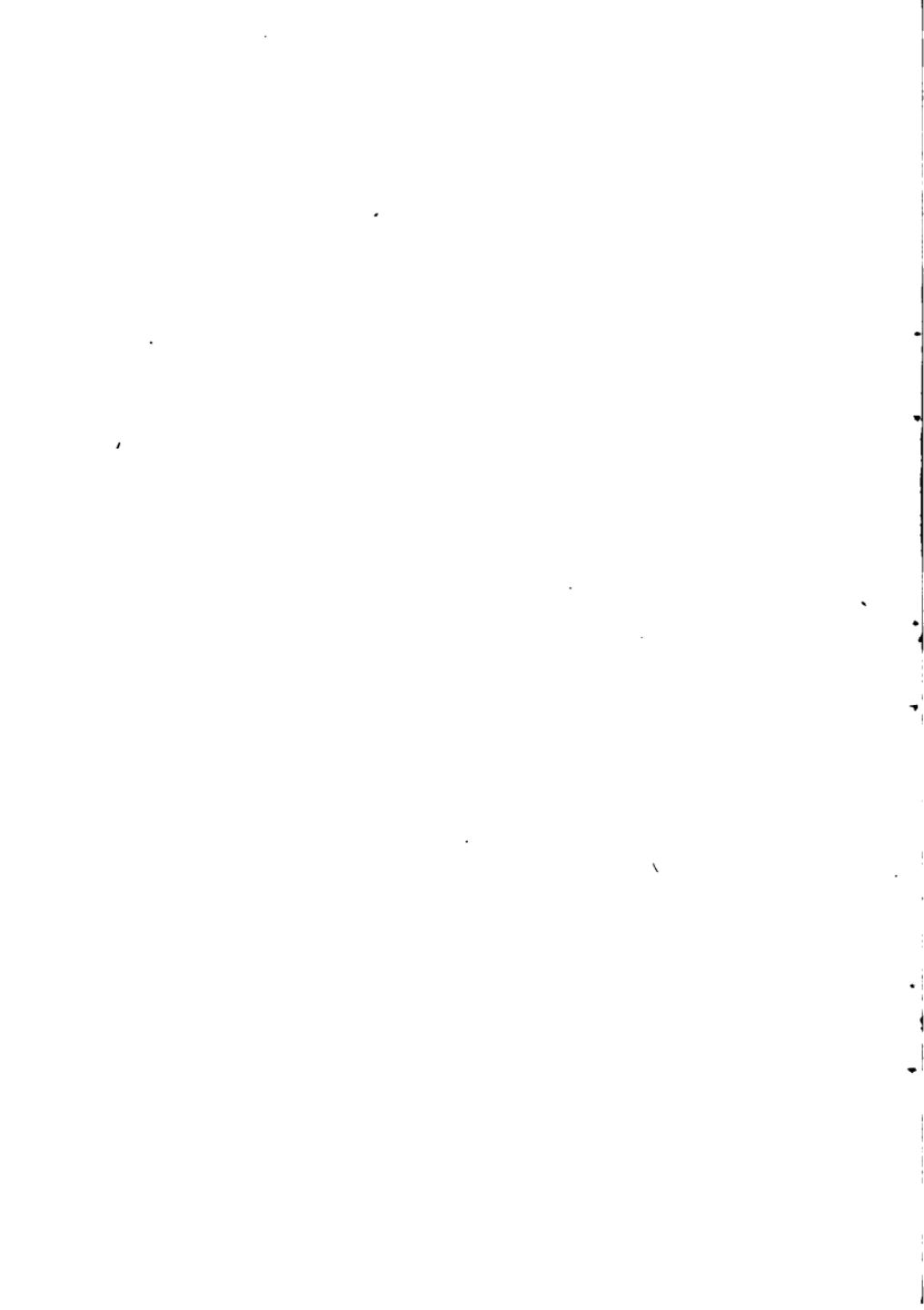
Ay, to me ;
 She is abused, stolen from me, and corrupted
 By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks :
 For nature so preposterously to err,
 Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
 Sans witchcraft could not.

Duke.

Whoe'er he be that, in this foul proceeding,
 Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself,
 And you of her, the bloody book of law
 You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
 After your own sense ; yea, though our proper son
 Stood in your action.

Bra.

Humbly I thank your grace.
 Here is the man, this Moor ; whom now, it seems,
 Your special mandate, for the state affairs,
 Hath hither brought.



Duke.

We are very sorry for it.

What, in your own part, can you say to this? [*To Othello.*

Bra.

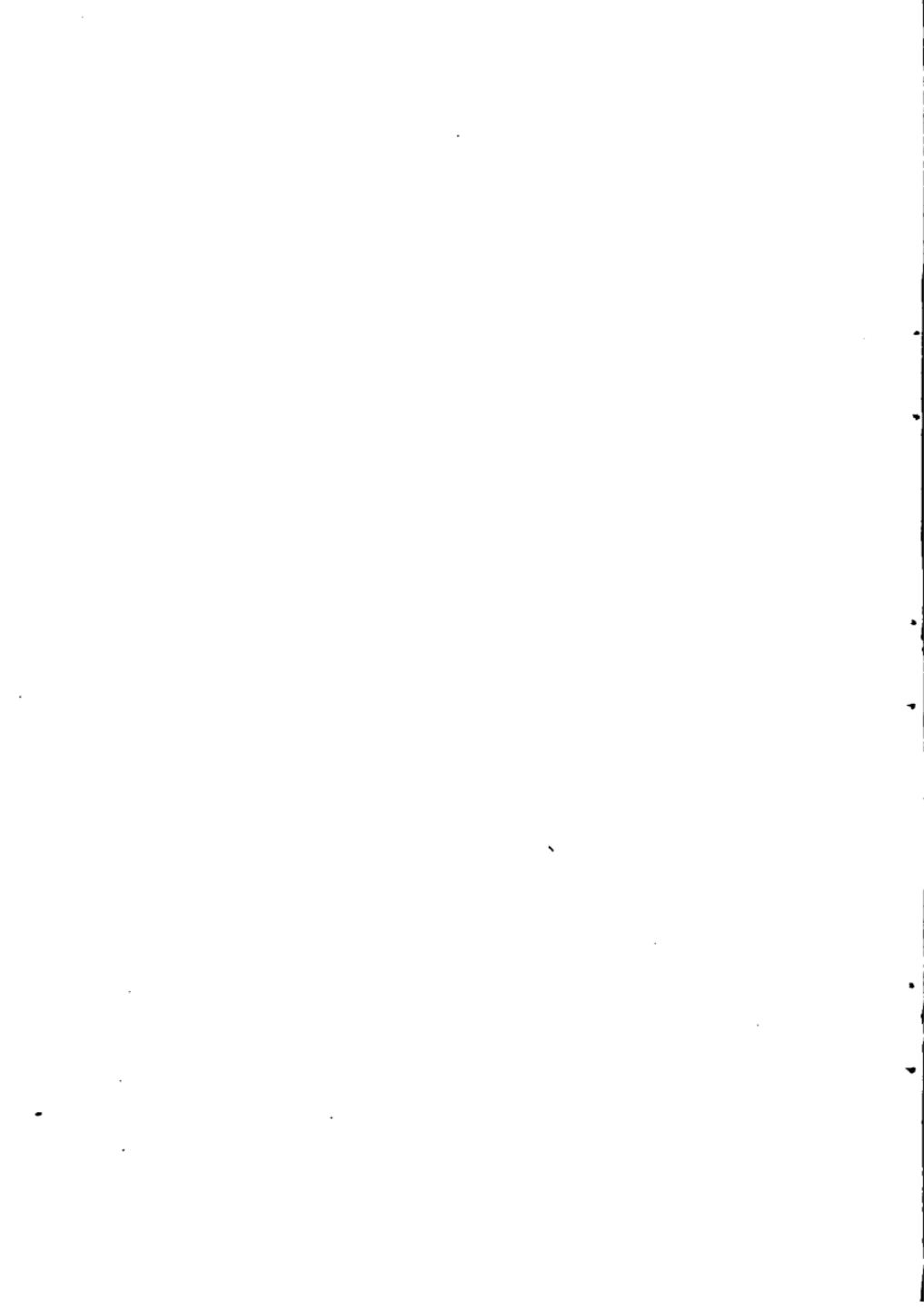
Nothing, but this is so.

Oth.

Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
 My very noble and approved good masters,—
 That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
 It is most true; true, I have married her:
 The very head and front of my offending
 Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
 And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace;
 For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
 Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
 Their dearest action in the tented field;
 And little of this great world can I speak,
 More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
 And therefore little shall I grace my cause
 In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
 I will a round unvarnished tale deliver
 Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,
 What conjuration, and what mighty magic,—
 For such proceeding I am charged withal,—
 I won his daughter.

Bra.

A maiden never bold;
 Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
 Blushed at herself; and she,—in spite of nature,
 Of years, of country, credit, everything,—
 To fall in love with what she feared to look on!
 It is a judgment maimed and most imperfect,
 That will confess perfection so could err
 Against all rules of nature;
 I therefore vouch again,
 That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
 Or with some dram conjured to this effect,
 He wrought upon her.



Duke.

To vouch this, is no proof.

Othello, speak :

Did you by indirect and forcèd courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections ?
Or came it by request, and such fair question
As soul to soul affordeth ?

Oth.

I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,
And let her speak of me before her father :
If you do find me foul in her report,
The trust, the office, I do hold of you,
Not only take away, but let your sentence
Even fall upon my life.

Duke.

[*To Officers.*

Fetch Desdemona hither.

Oth.

[*To Iago.*

Ancient, conduct them; you best know the place.—

[*Exeunt Iago and Roderigo, with Officers.*

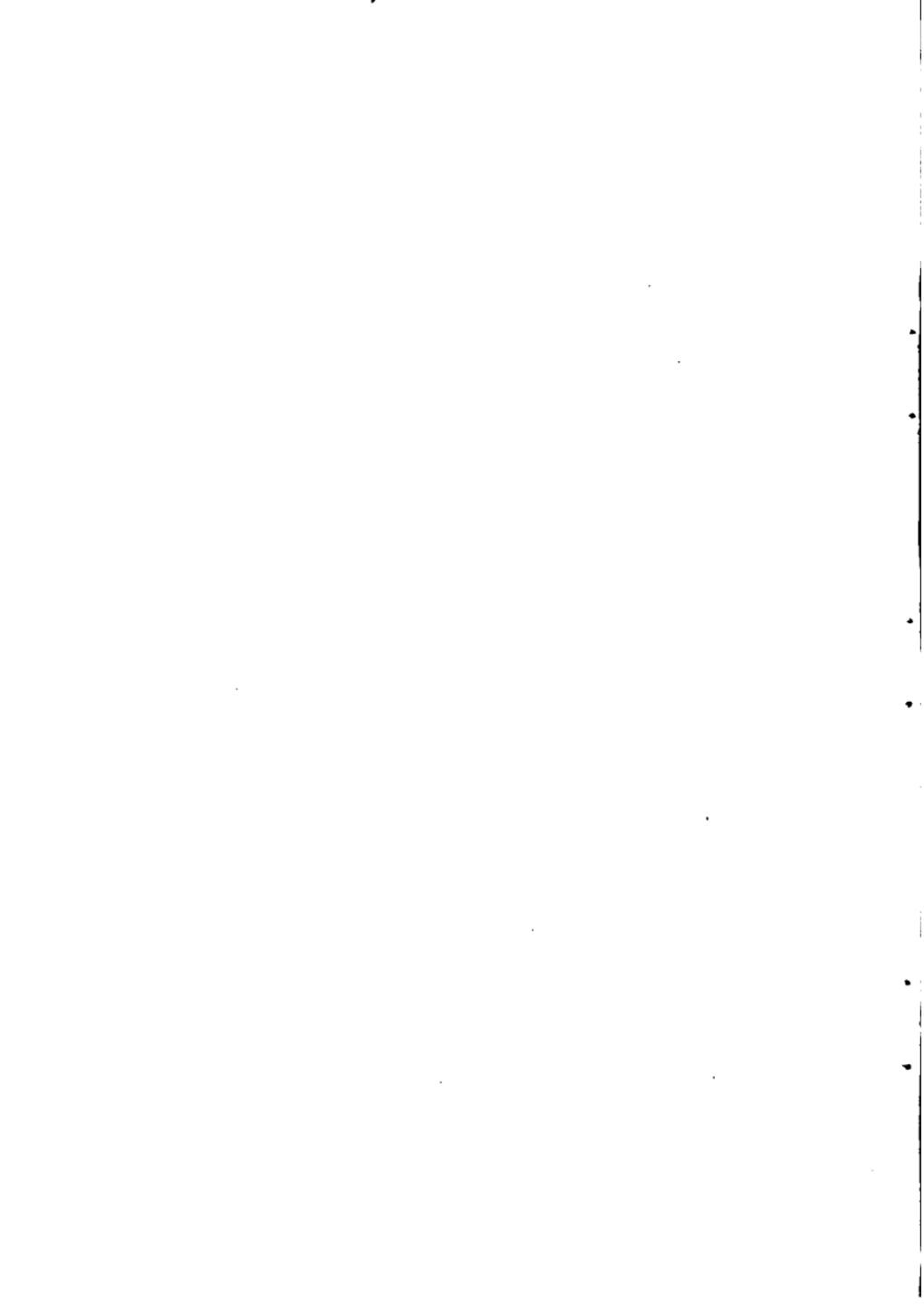
And, till she come, as truly as to heaven
I do confess the vices of my blood,
So justly to your grave ears I'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she in mine.

Duke.

Say it, Othello.

Oth.

Her father loved me; oft invited me;
Still questioned me the story of my life,
From year to year,—the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have passed.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it :



Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
 Of moving accidents by flood and field ;
 Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach ;
 Of being taken by the insolent foe,
 And sold to slavery ; of my redemption thence,
 And portance in my travel's history :
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
 Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch
 heaven,
 It was my hint to speak,—such was the process ;
 And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads -- - - - -
 Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear
 Would Desdemona seriously incline :
 But still the house affairs would draw her thence ;
 Which ever as she could with haste despatch,
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
 Devour up my discourse :— which I observing,
 Took once a pliant hour ; and found good means
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
 But not intently : I did consent ;
 And often did beguile her of her tears,
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke
 That my youth suffered. My story being done,
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs :
 She swore,—in faith, 't was strange, 't was passing strange ;
 'T was pitiful, 't was wondrous pitiful :
 She wished she had not heard it ; yet she wished
 That heaven had made her such a man : she thanked
 me ;
 And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
 I should but teach him how to tell my story,
 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake :
 She loved me for the dangers I had passed ;
 And I loved her that she did pity them.
 This only is the witchcraft I have used :—

[*Re-enter Roderigo.*

Here comes the lady ; let her witness it.



Duke.

I think this tale would win my daughter too.—
 Good Brabantio,
 Take up this mangled matter at the best :
 Men do their broken weapons rather use
 Than their bare hands.

Bra.

I pray you, hear her speak :
 If she confess that she was half the wooer,
 Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
 Light on the man !

[Enter Desdemona, attended by two Ladies, Iago,
 and Officers.

Come hither, gentle mistress :
 Do you perceive in all this noble company
 Where most you owe obedience ?

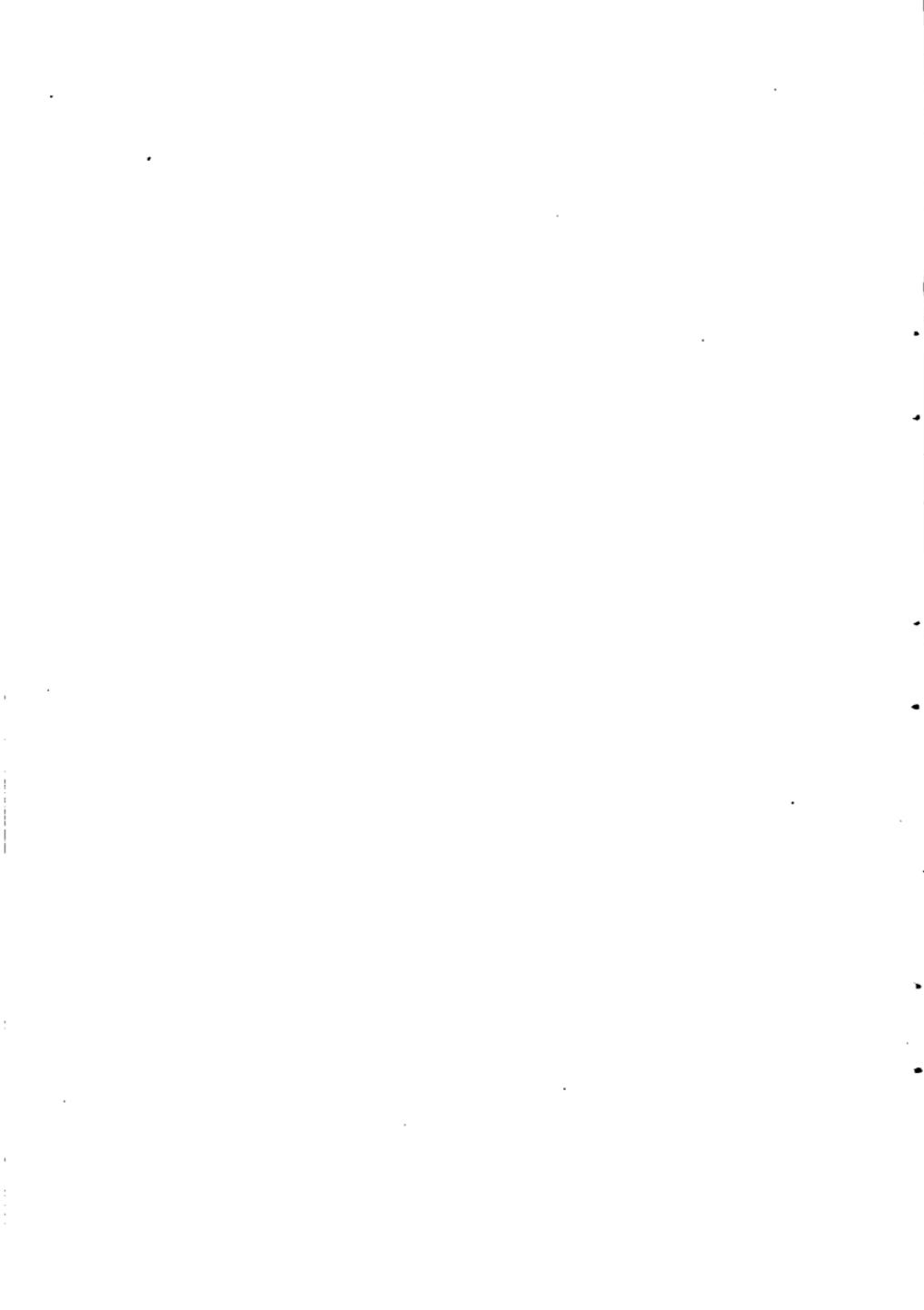
Des.

My noble father,
 I do perceive here a divided duty :
 To you I am bound for life and education ;
 My life and education both do learn me
 How to respect you ; you are the lord of duty,—
 I am hitherto your daughter : but here 's my husband ;
 And so much duty as my mother showed
 To you, preferring you before her father,
 So much I challenge that I may profess
 Due to the Moor, my lord.

Bra.

God be with you !— I have done.—
 Come hither, Moor :
 I here do give thee that with all my heart,
 Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
 I would keep from thee.
 I have done, my lord.
 Beseech you, now to the affairs of state.

[To Duke.



Duke.

The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus :—Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you ; you must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

Oth.

The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down : I do agnise
A natural and prompt alacrity
I find in hardness ; and do undertake
These present wars against the Ottomites.
Most humbly, therefore, bending to your state,
I crave fit disposition for my wife ;
Due reference of place and exhibition ;
With such accommodation and besort
As levels with her breeding.

Duke.

If you please,
Be 't at her father's.

Bra.

I 'll not have it so.

Oth.

Nor I.

Des.

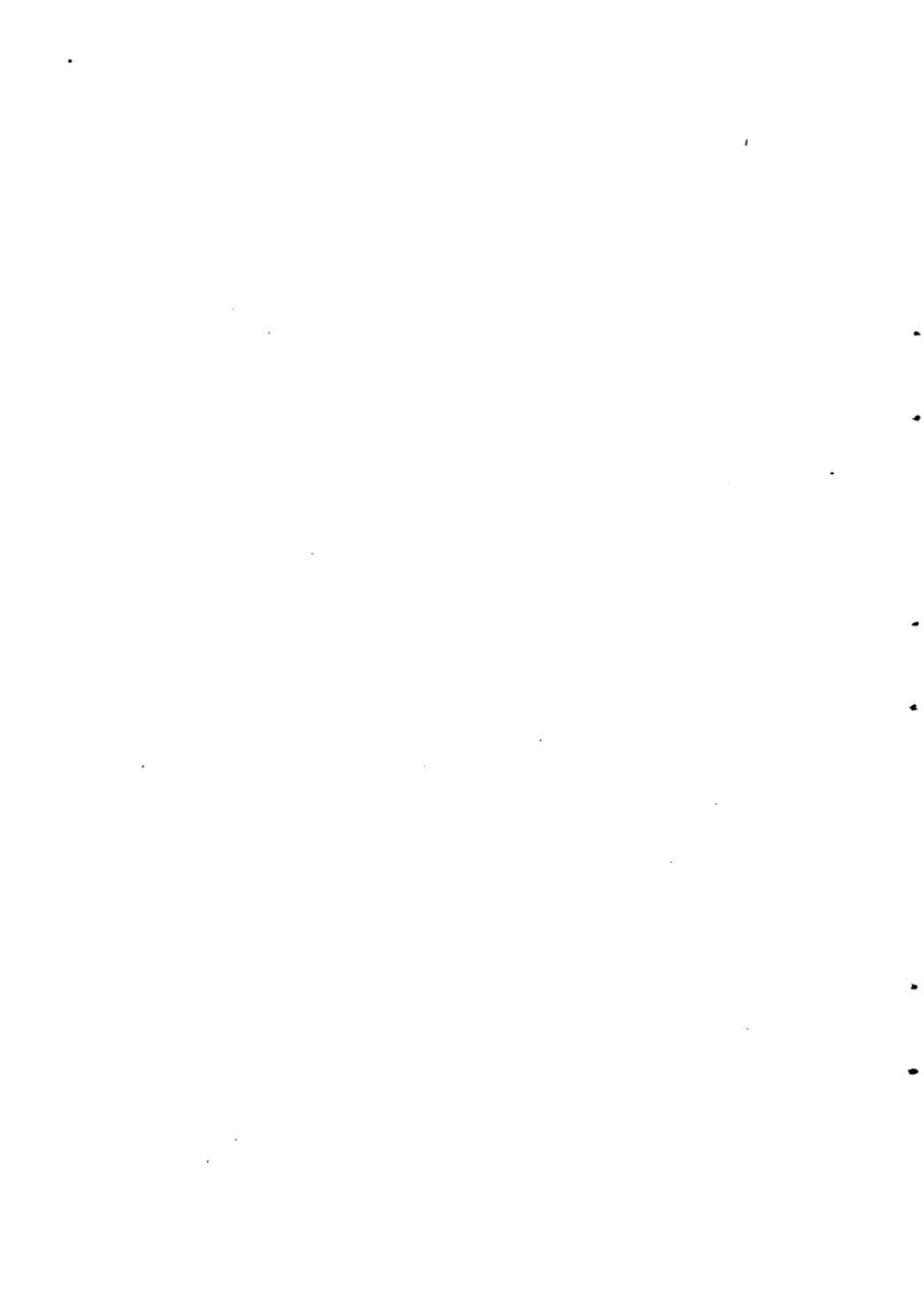
Nor I ; I would not there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke, [She kneels.
To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear ;
And let me find a charter in your voice,
To assist my simpleness.

Duke.

What would you, Desdemona ?

Des.

That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes



May trumpet to the world : my heart's subdued
 Even to the very quality of my lord :
 I saw Othello's visage in his mind ;
 And to his honours and his valiant parts
 Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
 So that, dear lords, if I be left behind.
 A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
 The rites for which I love him are bereft me,
 And I a heavy interim shall support
 By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

Oth.

Your voices, lords : beseech you, let her will
 Have a free way.

Duke.

Be it as you shall privately determine,

[*Othello raises Desdemona.*

Either for her stay or going : the affair cries haste,
 And speed must answer it.
 You must away to-night.

Des.

To-night, my lord ?

Oth.

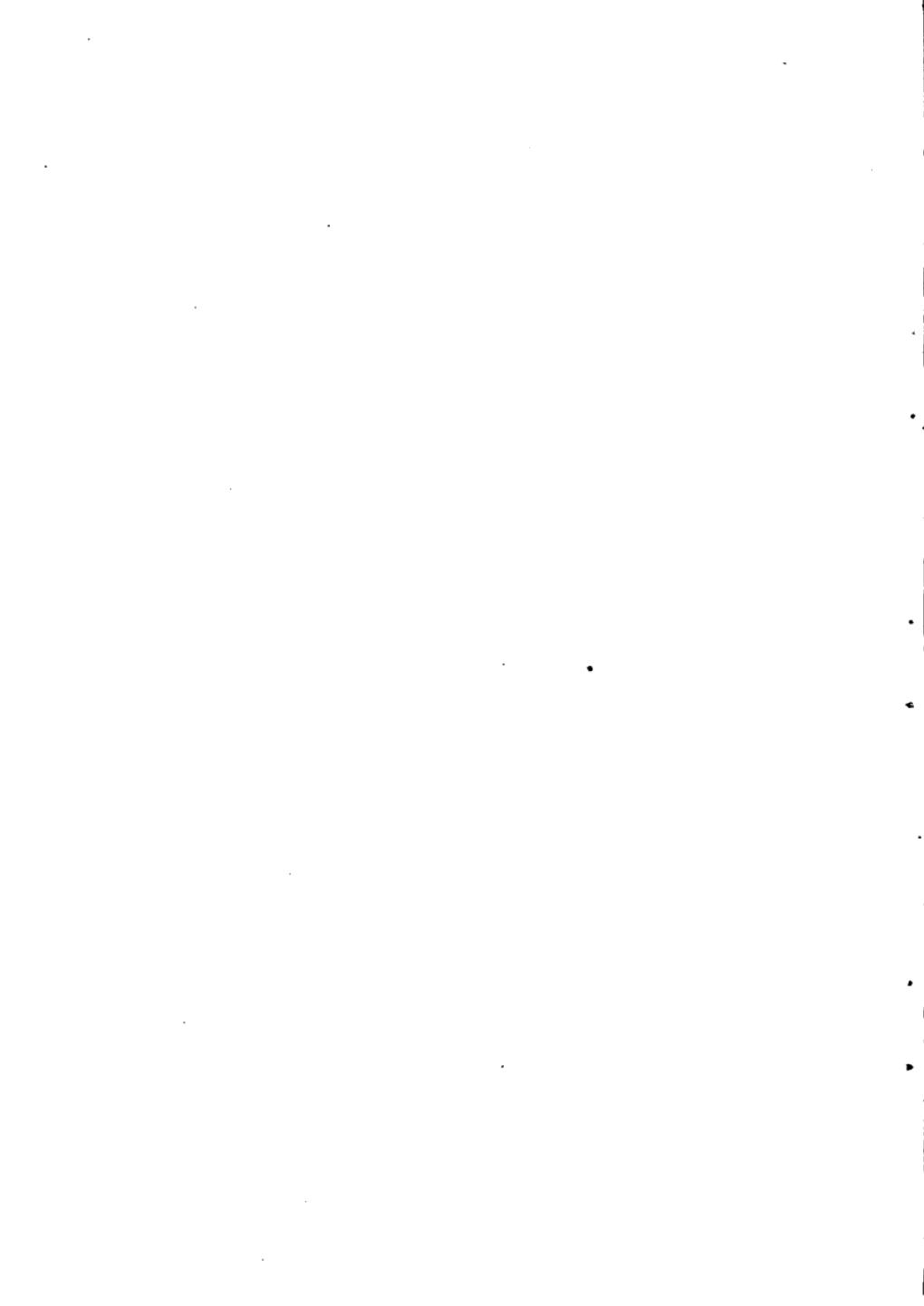
With all my heart.

Duke.

At nine i' the morning here we 'll meet again.—
 Othello, leave some officer behind,
 And he shall our commission bring to you ;
 With such things else of quality and respect
 As doth import you.

Oth.

So please your grace, my ancient ; [*Iago advances.*
 A man he is of honesty and trust :
 To his conveyance I assign my wife,
 With what else needful your good grace shall think
 To be sent after me.



Duke.

Let it be so.—

Good-night to every one. [*The Duke and Senators rise.*
And, noble signior, [*To Brabantio.*
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

[*Exeunt Duke and Senators.* All bow to them, as they pass. *Desdemona appeals, in action, to her father.*

Bra.

Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see :
She has deceived her father, and may thee.

[*Exit Brabantio.*

Oth.

My life upon her faith ! — Honest Iago, [*Iago advances.*
My Desdemona must I leave to thee :
I pr'ythee, let thy wife attend on her ;
And bring them after in the best advantage.—

[*Exeunt Iago and Roderigo.*

Come, Desdemona ; I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,
To spend with thee : we must obey the time.

[*Exeunt Othello and Desdemona.* — *Change.*

Scene Fifth.—A DARK STREET. [FIRST GROOVES.]

[*Enter Iago and Roderigo.*

Rod.

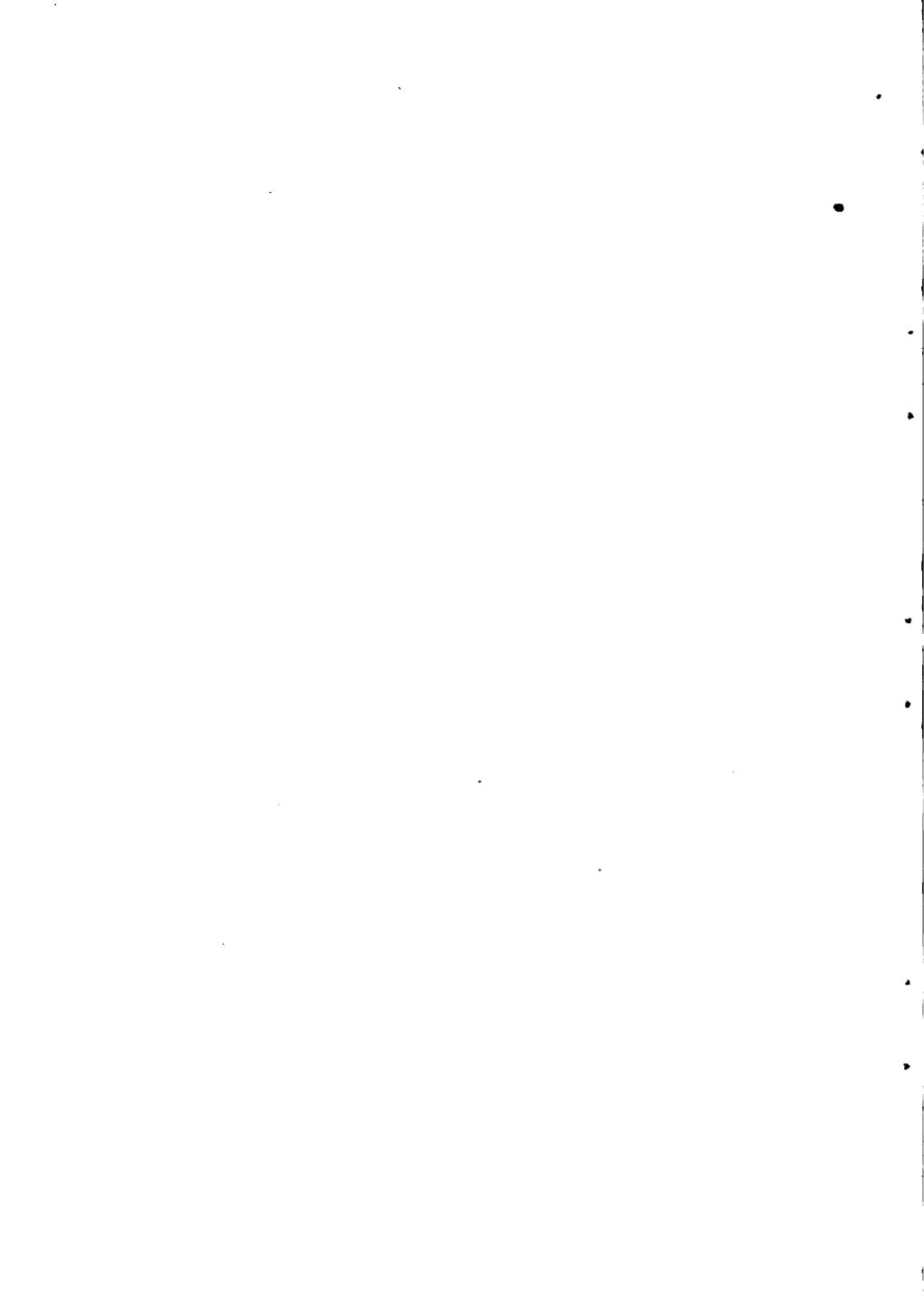
Iago,—

Iago.

What say'st thou, noble heart ?

Rod.

What will I do, thinkest thou ?



Iago.

Why, go to bed, and sleep.

Rod.

I will incontinently drown myself.

Iago.

If thou dost, I shall never love thee after.

Why, thou silly gentleman !

Rod.

It is silliness to live when to live is torment; and then have we a prescription to die when death is our physician.

Iago.

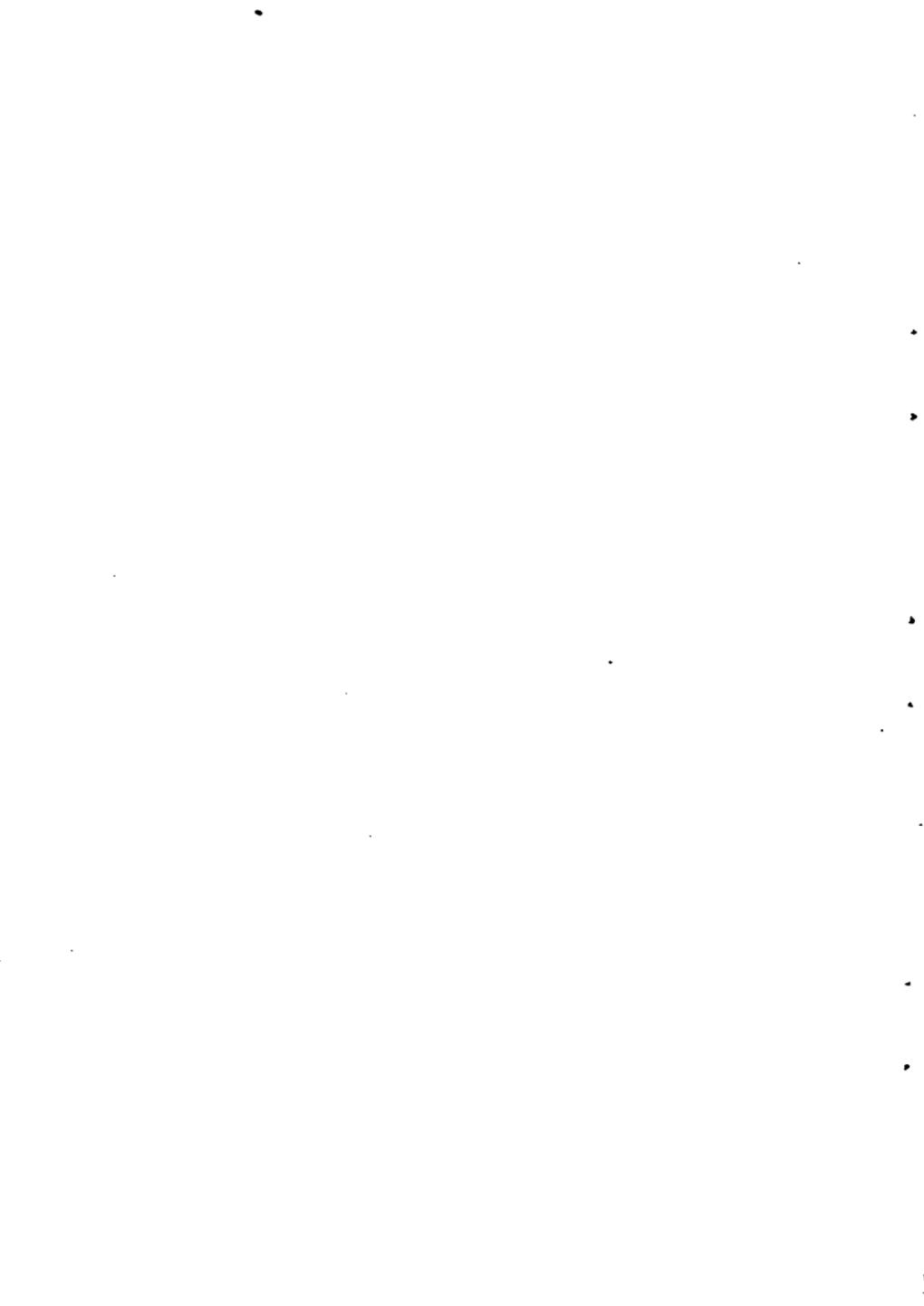
O, villainous ! I have looked upon the world for four times seven years ; and since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say, I would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.

Rod.

What should I do ? I confess it is my shame to be so fond ; but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

Iago.

Virtue ! a fig ! 't is in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Come, be a man : drown thyself ! drown cats and blind puppies. I have professed me thy friend, and I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse ; follow these wars ; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor,— put money in thy purse ;— nor he his to her : it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration ;— put but money in thy purse. If sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian



and a supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt have her ; therefore, make money. A plague of drowning ! it is clean out of the way : seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy, than to be drowned and go without her.

Rod.

Wilt thou be fast to my hopes if I depend on the issue ?

Iago.

Thou art sure of me :— go, make money :— I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor : my cause is hearted ; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him ; if thou canst injure him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. Traverse ; go ; provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

Rod.

Where shall we meet i' the morning ?

Iago.

At my lodging.

Rod.

I 'll be with thee betimes.

Iago.

Go to ; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo ?

Rod.

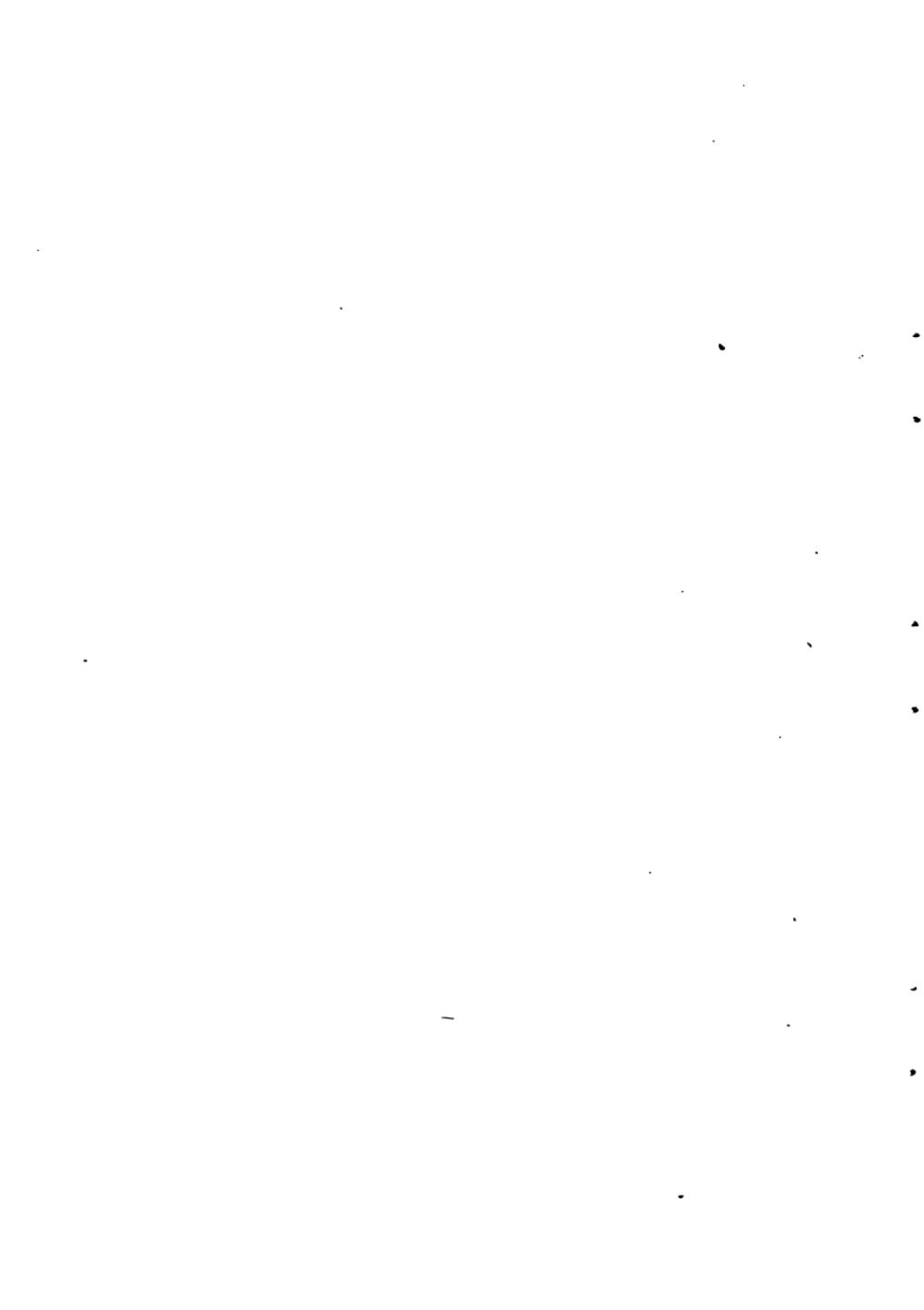
What say you ?

Iago.

No more of drowning, do you hear ?

Rod.

I am changed ; I 'll sell all my land.



Iago.

Go to ; farewell :

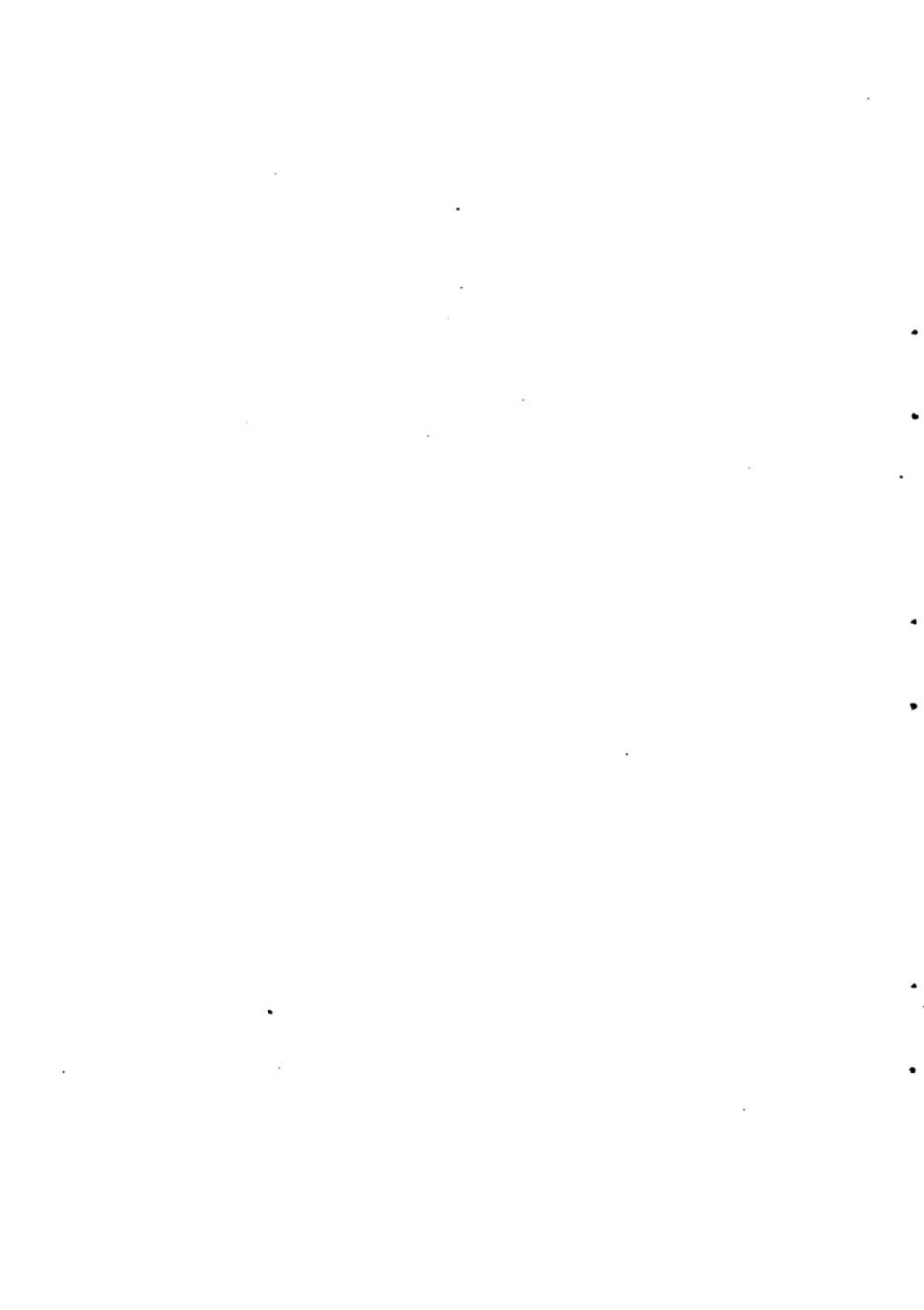
[*Exit Roderigo.*

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse ;
 For I mine own gained knowledge should profane,
 If I would time expend with such a snipe,
 But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor ;
 And it is thought abroad he hath done my office :
 I know not if 't be true ;
 But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
 Will do as if for surety. He holds me well ;
 The better shall my purpose work on him.
 Cassio 's a proper man : let me see now ;
 To get his place, and to plume up my will
 In double knavery.— How, how ?— Let 's see :—
 After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
 That he is too familiar with his wife :—
 He hath a person, and a smooth dispose,
 To be suspected ; framed to make women false.
 The Moor is of a free and open nature,
 That thinks men honest that but seem to be so ;
 And will as tenderly be led by the nose
 As asses are.
 I have 't ;— it is engendered :— hell and night
 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

[*Exit.*

CURTAIN.





Act Second.

Scene First. { FAMAGUSTA, A FORTIFIED SEA-PORT TOWN
IN THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS. CASTLE
ON PLATFORM R. SEA-VIEW C. STONE
SEAT C. PLATFORM AND STEPS AT BACK.
ARCH L. THE SCENE IS IN FRONT OF THE
CASTLE, AT SUNSET. CASSIO, MONTANO,
AND SEVERAL GENTLEMEN DISCOVERED.

Cas.

Thanks, you, the valiant of this warlike isle,
That so approve the Moor! O, let the heavens
Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea!

Mon.

Is he well shipped?

Cas.

His barque is stoutly timbered, and his pilot
Of very expert and approved allowance;
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.

Mon.

But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?

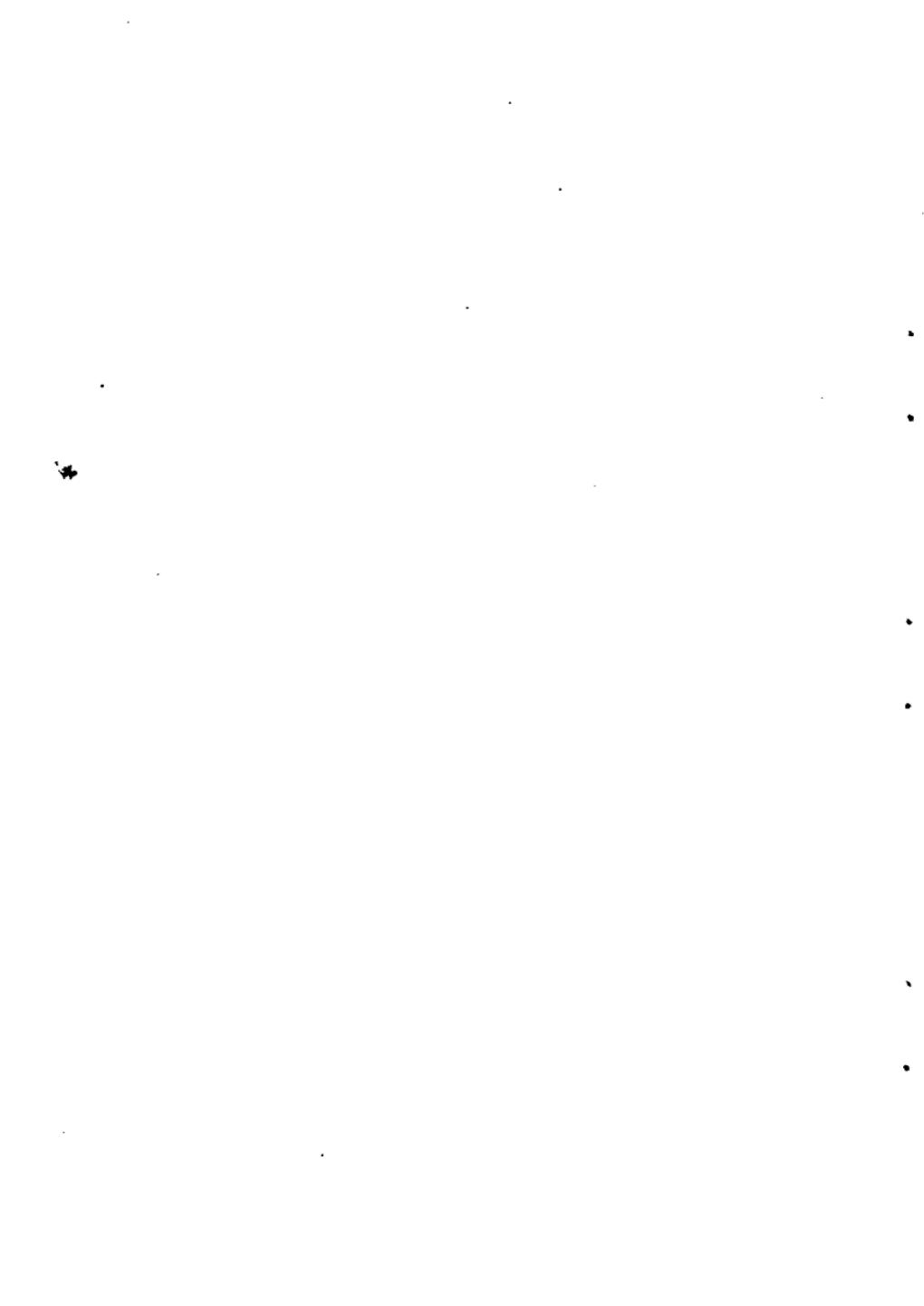
Cas.

Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid
That paragons description and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in the essential vesture of creation
Does bear all excellency.

[*Cheers within.*

[Enter Desdemona, Emilia, Iago, Roderigo, and
Attendants.

The riches of the ship is come on shore!



Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.—

[*They kneel.*

Hail to thee, lady ! and the grace of Heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round !

Des.

[*Gives her hand to Cassio.*

I thank you, valiant Cassio.

What tidings can you tell me of my lord ?

Cas.

He is not yet arrived : nor know I aught
But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

Des.

O, but I fear.—How lost you company ?

Cas.

The great contention of the sea and skies

Parted our fellowship :—

[*Iago places his cloak on stone seat. Desdemona sits c.*

Cas.

Good ancient, you are welcome :—

[*To Iago.*

Welcome, mistress :—

[*To Emilia.*

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,

That I extend my manners ; 't is my breeding

That gives me this bold show of courtesy. [*Kissing her.*

Iago.

Sir, would she give you so much of her lips

As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,

You'd have enough.

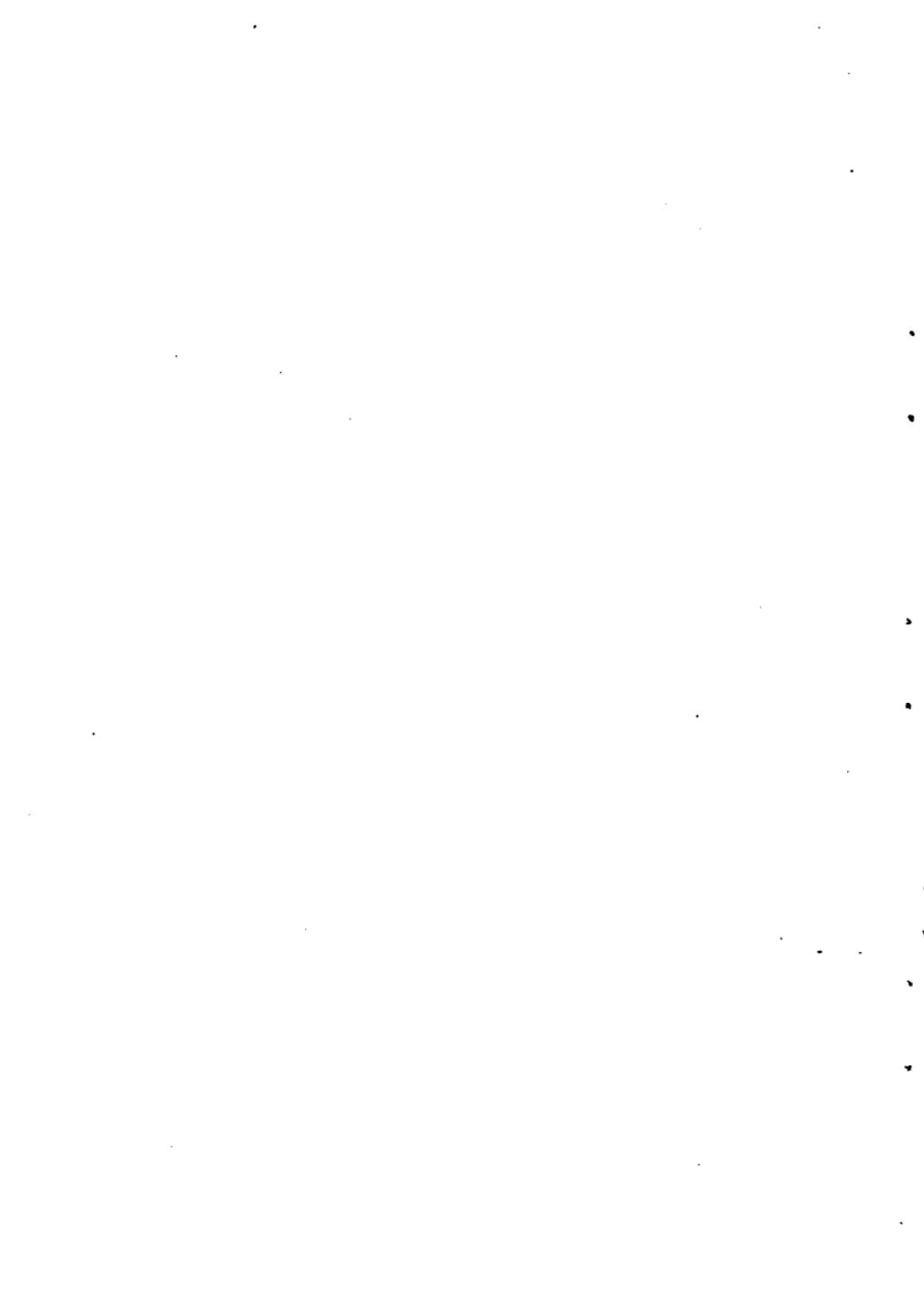
Des.

Alas ! she has no speech.

Iago.

In faith, too much ;

I find it still, when I have list to sleep :



Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

Emil.

You have little cause to say so.

Iago.

Come on, come on ; you are pictures out of doors,
Bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended.

Des.

O, fie upon thee, slanderer !

Iago.

Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk.

Emil.

You shall not write my praise.

Iago.

No, let me not.

Des.

What wouldest thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise
me ?

Iago.

O, gentle lady, do not put me to 't ;
For I am nothing if not critical.

Des.

Come on, assay.—There's one gone to the harbour ?

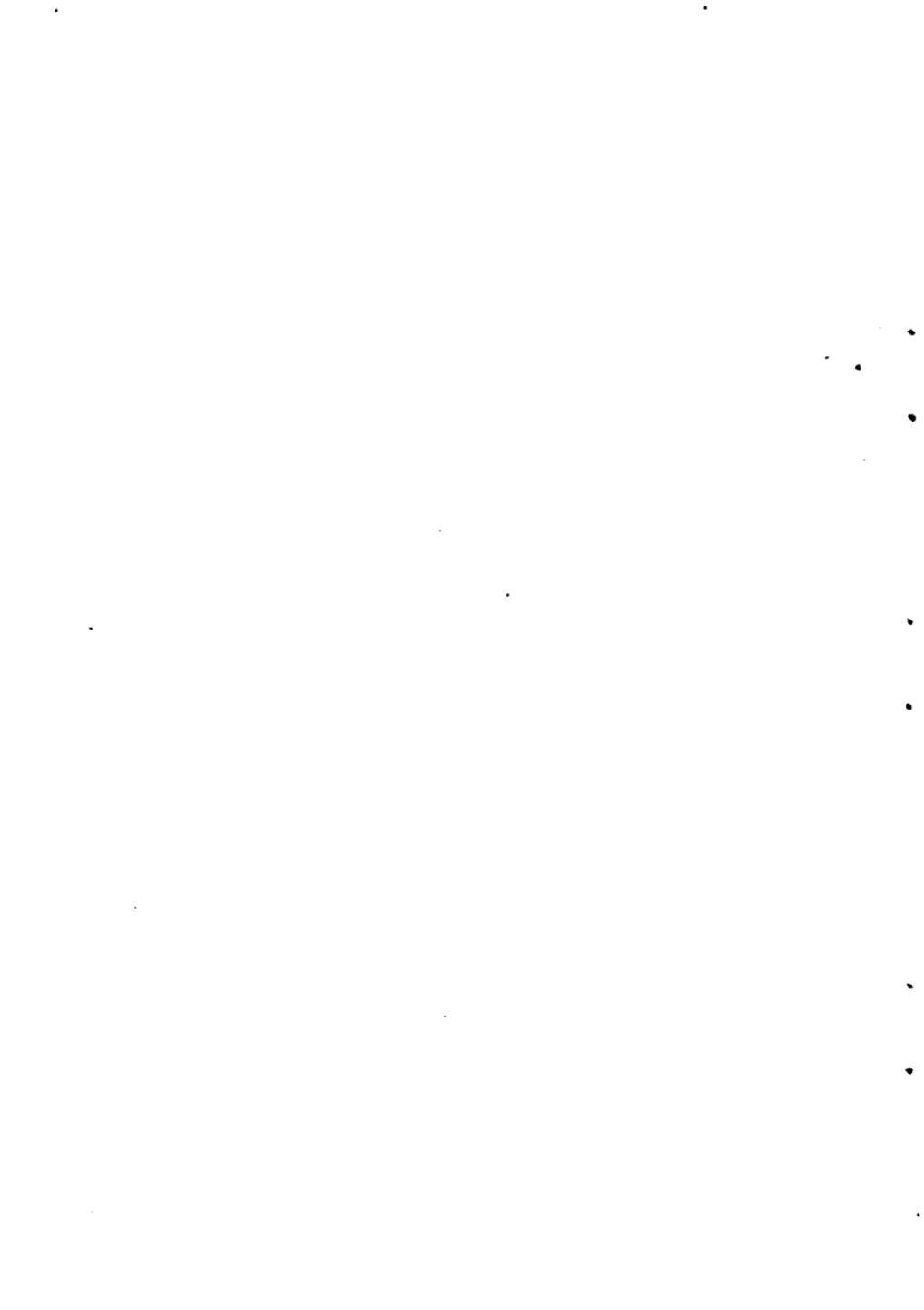
Iago.

Ay, madam.

Des.

I am not merry ; but I do beguile
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise :—

But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving
woman indeed,—one that, in the authority of her merit,
did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself ?



Iago.

I am about it ; but, indeed, my invention
 Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frize,—
 It plucks out brains and all : but my Muse labours,
 And thus she is delivered :—
 She that was ever fair, and never proud ;
 Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud ;
 Never lacked gold, and yet went never gay ;
 Fled from her wish, and yet said, “Now I may ;”
 She that, being angered, her revenge being nigh,
 Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly ;
 She that could think and ne’er disclose her mind ;
 See suitors following, and not look behind ;
 She was a wight, if ever such wight were —

*Des.**To do what ?**Iago.**To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.* [All laugh.]*Des.*

O, most lame and impotent conclusion !—
 Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband.—How say you, Cassio ? [Desdemona rises] is he not a most profane and liberal counsellor ?

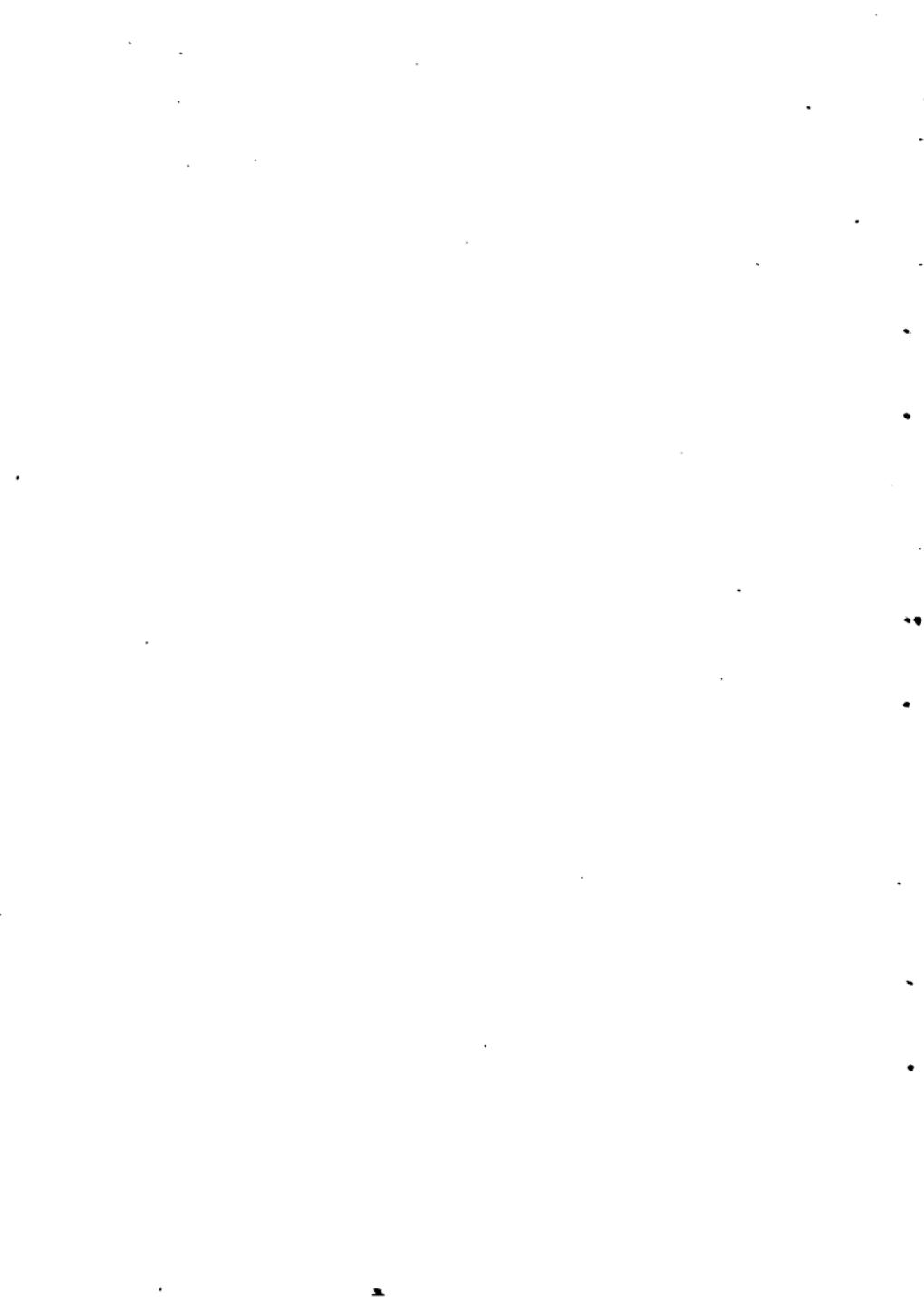
Cas.

He speaks home, madam : you may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar. [All but Iago retire.]

*Iago.**[Aside.]*

He takes her by the palm : ay, well said, whisper : with as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do ; I will gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true ; 't is so, indeed : if such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft.—

*[Trumpet heard.]**The Moor ! I know his trumpet.**[March pp. and cheers.]*



Des. [Starting forward.

Let's meet him, and receive him.

[Enter Othello and Attendants c. Iago, Cassio, and Gentlemen salute Othello.

O, my fair warrior !

Oth.

My dear Othello !

Des.

} *They embrace.*

Oth.

It gives me wonder great as my content
To see you here before me. O, my soul's joy !
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have wakened death !
And let the labouring barque climb hills of seas
Olympus-high, and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven ! If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy ; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

Des.

The heavens forbid
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow !

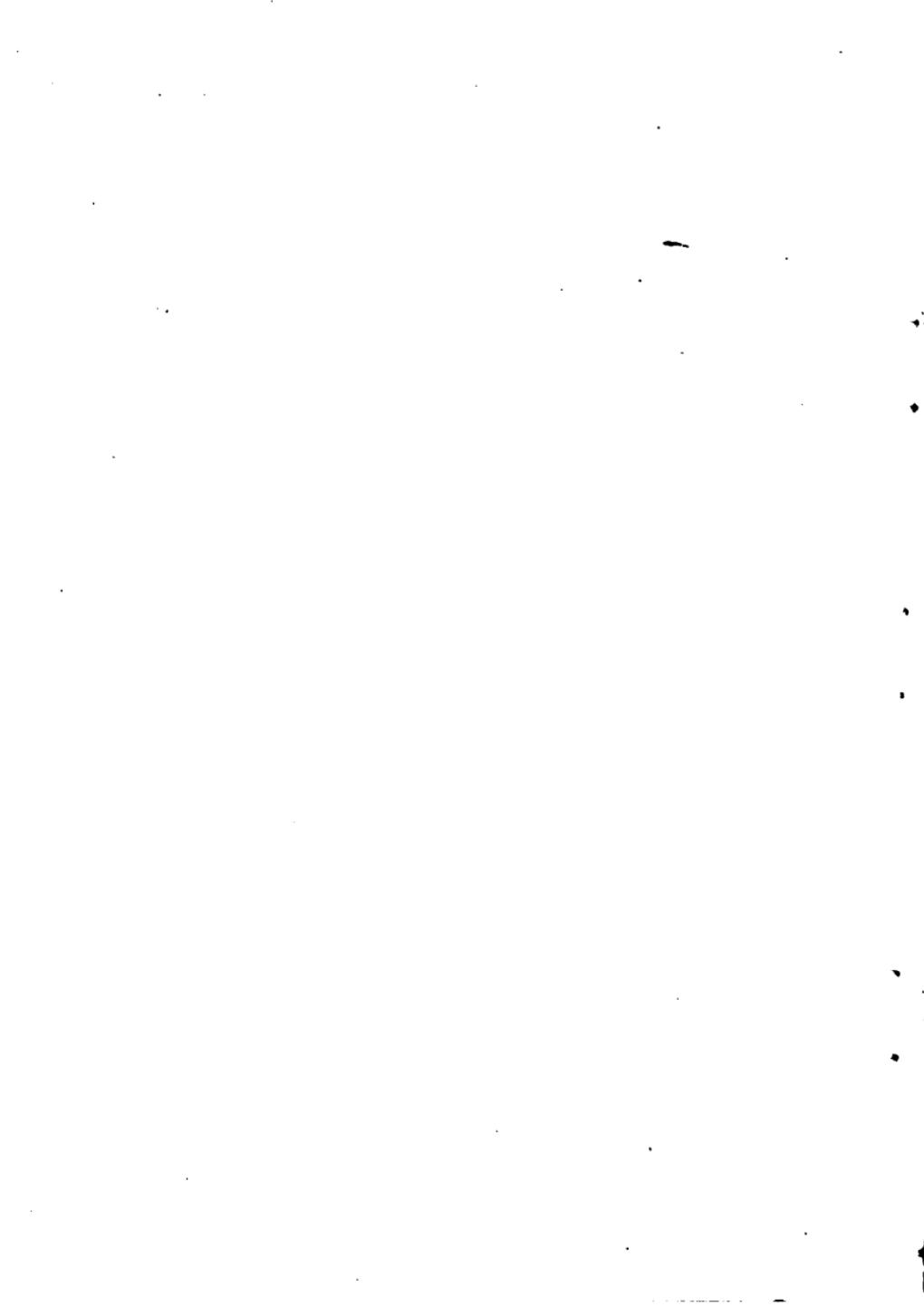
Oth.

Amen to that, sweet powers !—
And this, and this [kissing her], the greatest discords be
That e'er our hearts shall make !

Iago.

[Aside.

O, you are well tuned now !
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.



Oth.

News, friends ; our wars are done, the Turks are drowned. [Flourish and cheers.]
 How does my old acquaintance of this isle ?
 Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus ;
 I have found great love amongst them. O, my sweet,
 I prattle out of fashion, and I dote
 In mine own comforts.—I pr'ythee, good Iago,
 Go to the bay, and disembark my coffers :
 Bring thou the master to the citadel ;
 He is a good one, and his worthiness
 Does challenge much respect. [Exit Iago.]
 Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night :
 Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,
 Not to outport discretion.

Cas.

Iago hath direction what to do ;
 But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye
 Will I look to't.

Oth.

Iago is most honest.
 Michael, good-night : to-morrow with your earliest
 Let me have speech with you.
 Come, Desdemona,
 Once more well met at Cyprus.

[March and cheers.]

[Exeunt Othello, and Desdemona R. Exeunt Attendants L.]

[The scene becomes dusky. Re-enter Iago.]

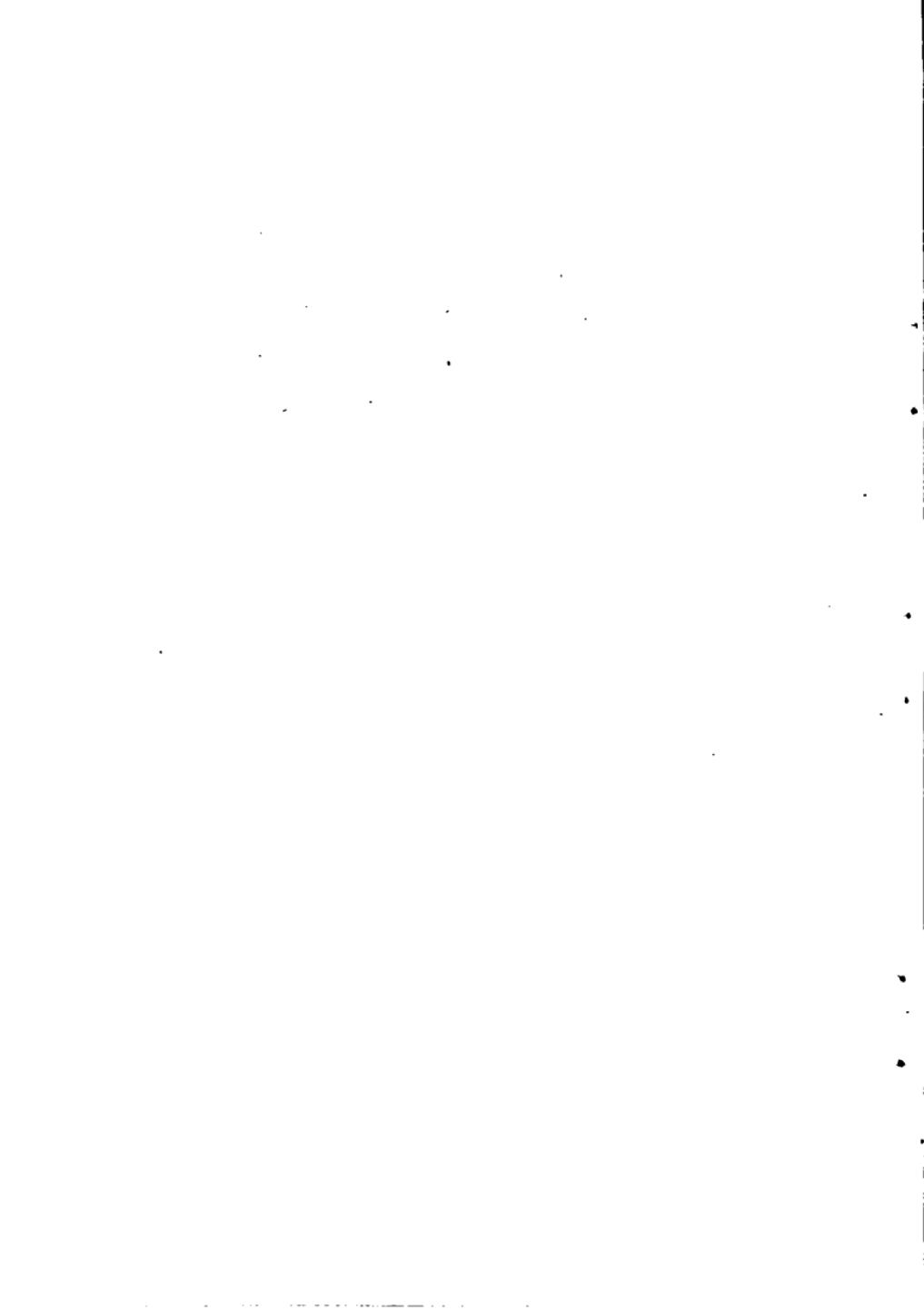
Iago.

[To Roderigo.]

Do thou meet me presently. The lieutenant to-night
 watches on the court of guard :—first, I must tell thee
 this—Desdemona is directly in love with him.

Rod.

With him ! why, 't is not possible.



Iago.

Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies: and will she love him still for prating? let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil?

Rod.

I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blessed condition.

Iago.

Blessed fig's-end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor: blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

Rod.

Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

Iago.

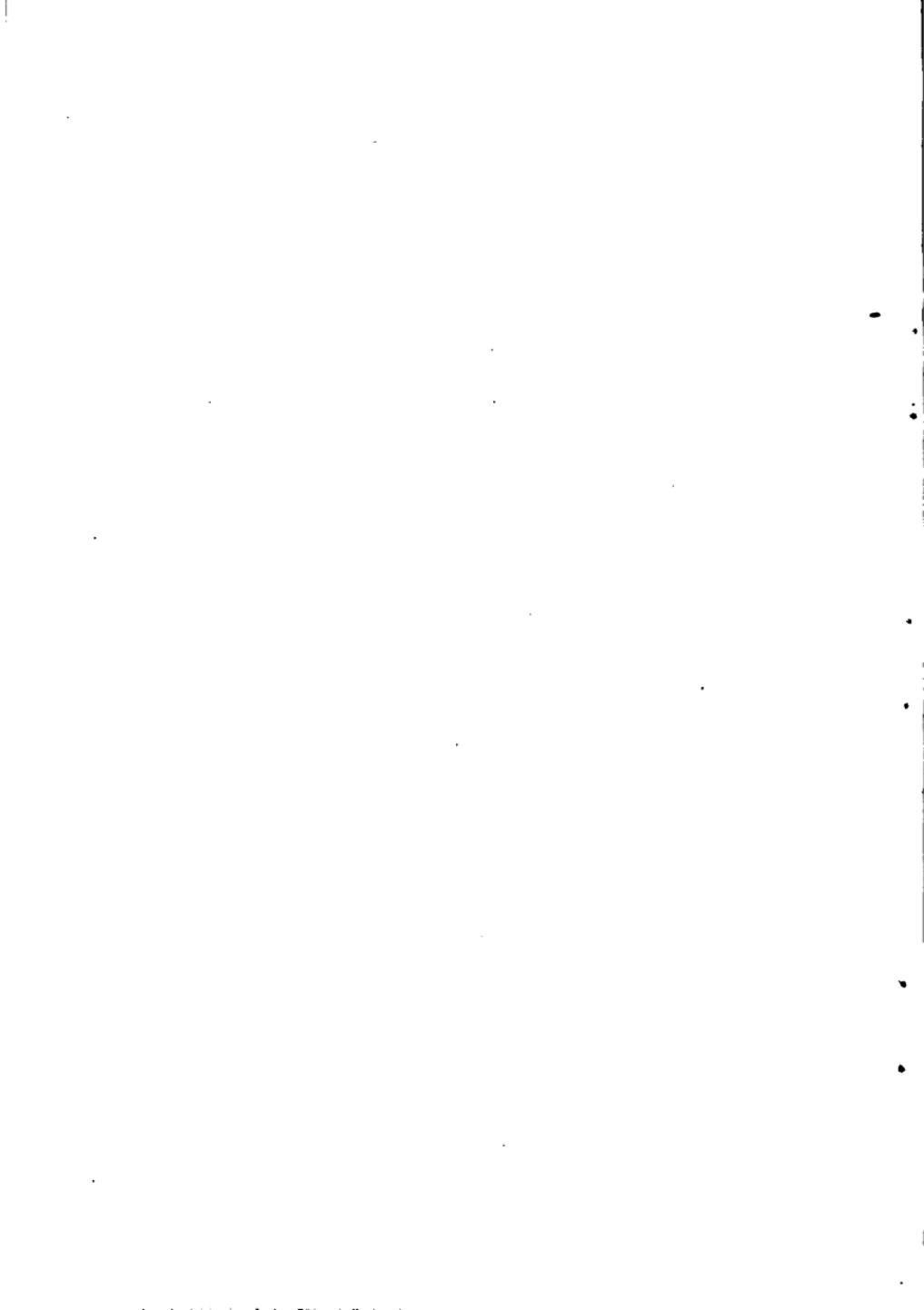
Lechery, by this hand; an index and obscure prologue to the history of foul thoughts. But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay't upon you: Cassio knows you not:—I'll not be far from you: do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud or tainting his discipline; or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

Rod.

Well.

Iago.

Sir, he is rash, and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you: provoke him, that he may; for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny; whose qualifications shall come into no true taste again but by the displanting of Cassio.



Rod.

I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

Iago.

I warrant thee. Meet me by and by. Farewell.

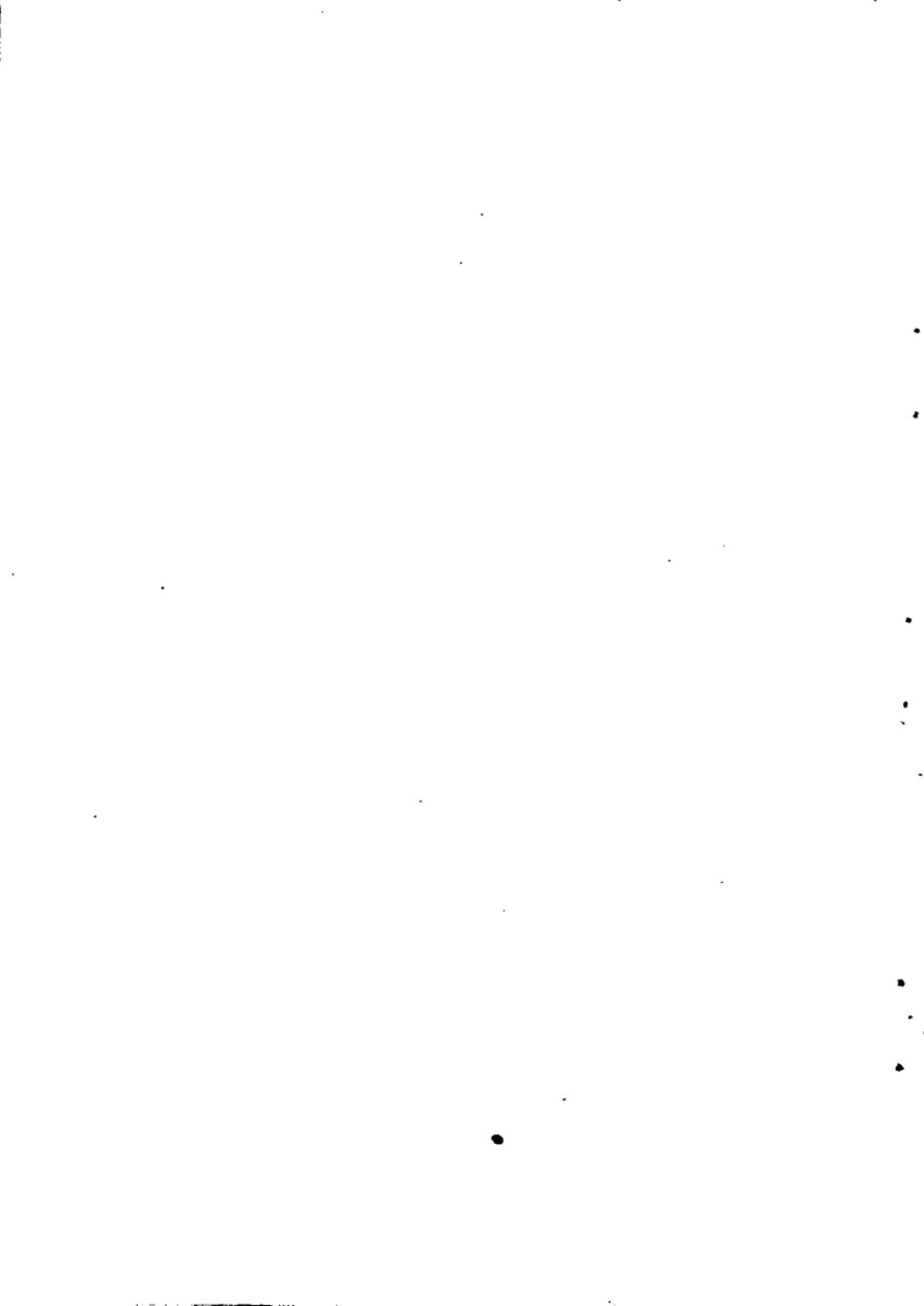
Rod.

Adieu.

[*Exit Roderigo R. i. E.—Moonlight.*

Iago.

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;
 That she loves him, 't is apt, and of great credit:
 The Moor,—howbeit that I endure him not,—
 Is of a constant, loving, noble nature;
 And I dare think he 'll prove to Desdemona
 A most dear husband. Now, I do love her, too;
 Not out of absolute lust,—though peradventure
 I stand accountant for as great a sin,—
 But partly led to diet my revenge,
 For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
 Hath leapt into my seat, the thought whereof
 Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;
 And nothing can or shall content my soul
 Till I am evened with him, wife for wife;
 Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor
 At least into a jealousy so strong
 That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,—
 If this poor trash of Venice, whom I track
 For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,—
 I 'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip;
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb,—
 For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too;—
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
 For making him egregiously an ass,
 And practising upon his peace and quiet
 Even to madness. 'T is here, but yet confused:
 Knavery's plain face is never seen till used. [*Exit Iago.*



[This—the Herald passage—is sometimes omitted.]

[Shouts and drum. Enter a Herald, followed by the populace.]

Her.

It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him: for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial:—so much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open; and there is full liberty of feasting, from this present hour till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus, and our noble general, Othello!

[Drum and shouts. *Exeunt Herald and populace.*
Re-enter Cassio and Iago.

Cas.

Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

Iago.

Not this hour, lieutenant; 't is not yet ten o'clock. Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona; whom let us not therefore blame.

Cas.

She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago.

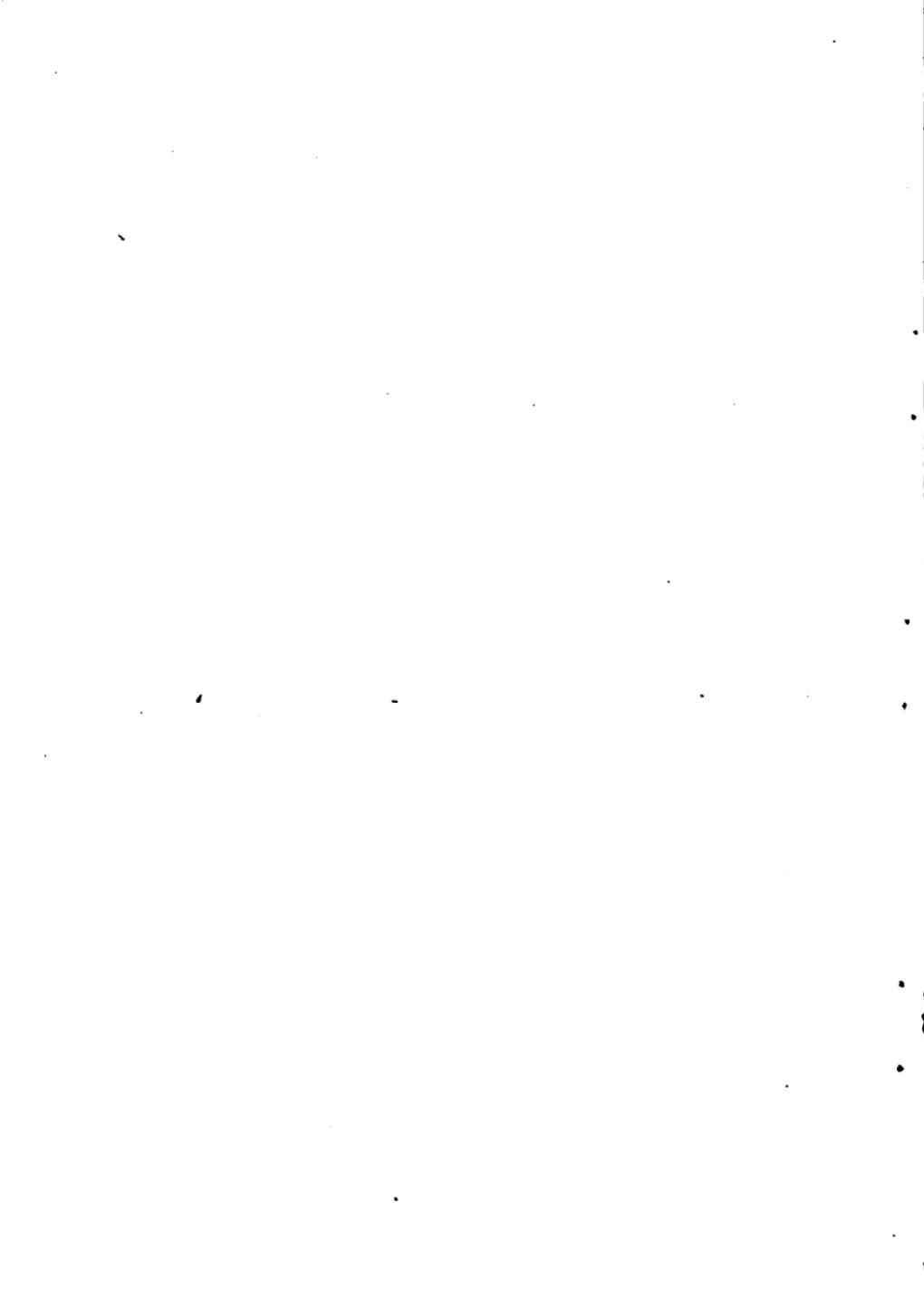
What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley to provocation.

Cas.

An inviting eye; and yet methinks right modest.

Iago.

And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?



Cas.

She is, indeed, perfection.

Iago.

Well, happiness be theirs! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoop of wine; and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

Cas.

Not to-night, good Iago; I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking: I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

Iago.

O, they are our friends; but one cup: I'll drink for you.

Cas.

I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified, too, and, behold, what innovation it makes here: I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

Iago.

What, man! 't is a night of revels: the gallants desire it.

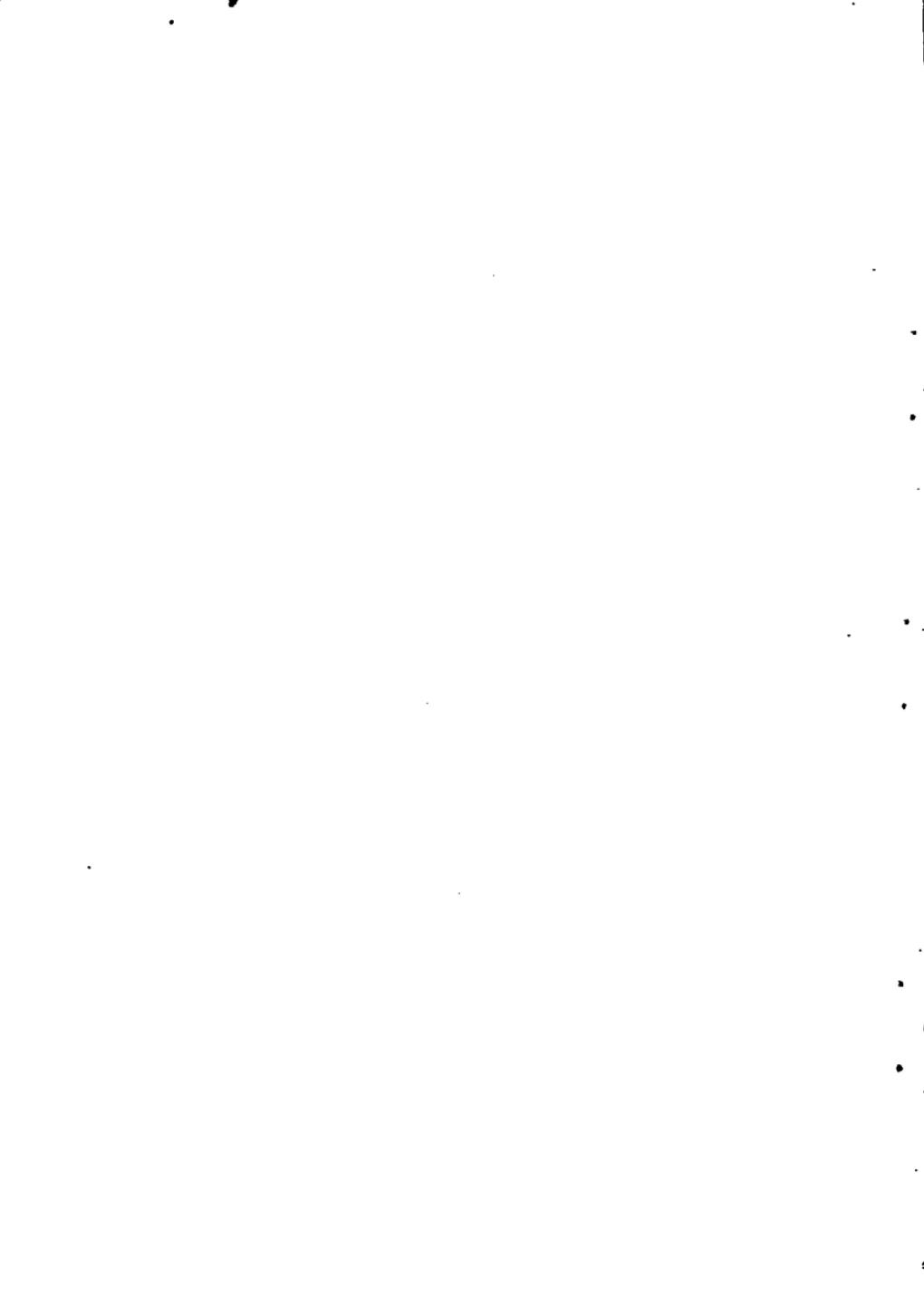
Cas.

I'll do 't; but it dislikes me.

[*Exit.*

Iago.

If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He 'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool,
Roderigo,
Whom love has turned almost the wrong side out,
To Desdemona hath to-night caroused
Potations pottle deep; and he 's to watch:
Three lads of Cyprus,—noble, swelling spirits,
That hold their honours in a wary distance,



The very elements of this warlike isle,—
 Have I to-night flustered with flowing cups,
 And they watch, too. Now, 'mongst this flock of
 drunkards, [Laughter within.]
 Am I to put our Cassio in some action
 That may offend the isle:— [Laughter within.]
 But here they come:
 If consequence do but approve my dream,
 My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

[Re-enter Cassio; with him Montano and Gentlemen.

Cas.

'Fore heaven, they have given me a rouse already.

Mon.

Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a
 soldier.

Iago.

Some wine, ho!

[Enter Servant, with wine.

[Iago sings.

And let me the canakin clink, clink ;
 And let me the canakin clink :
 A soldier's a man ;
 A life's but a span ;
 Why, then, let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys !

Cas.

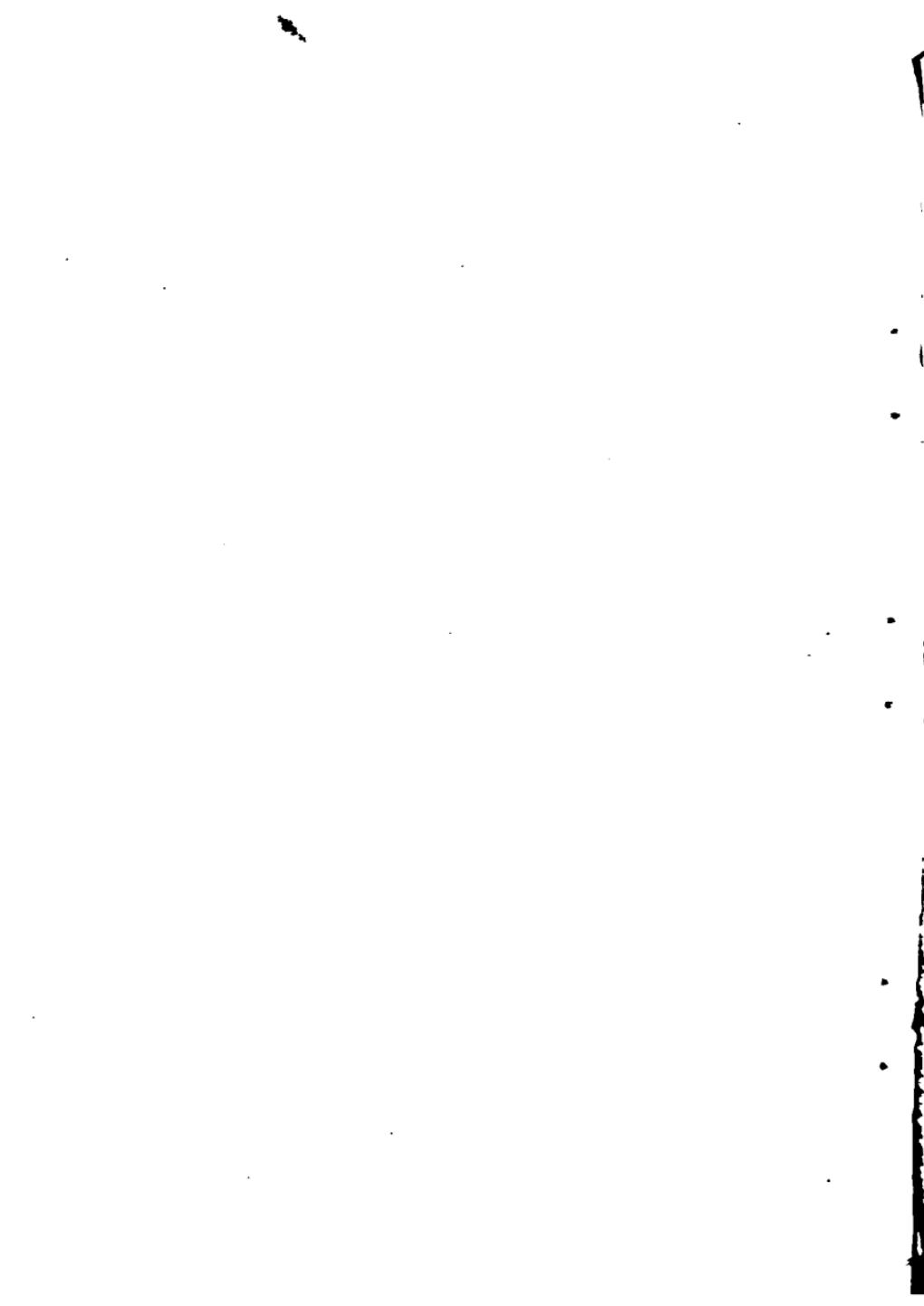
'Fore heaven, an excellent song.

Iago.

I learned it in England, where, indeed, they are most
 potent in potting: your Dane, your German, and your
 swag-bellied Hollander,—Drink, ho!—are nothing to your
 English.

Cas.

Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking ?



Iago.

Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk ;
he sweats not to overthrow your Almain ; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be filled.

Cas.

To the health of our general !

[*Iago empties his own glass on the ground.*

Mon.

I am for it, lieutenant ; and I 'll do you justice.

Iago.

O, sweet England !

[*Singing.*

King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown ;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he called the tailor lown.

Some wine, ho !

Cas.

Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

Iago.

Will you hear 't again ?

Cas.

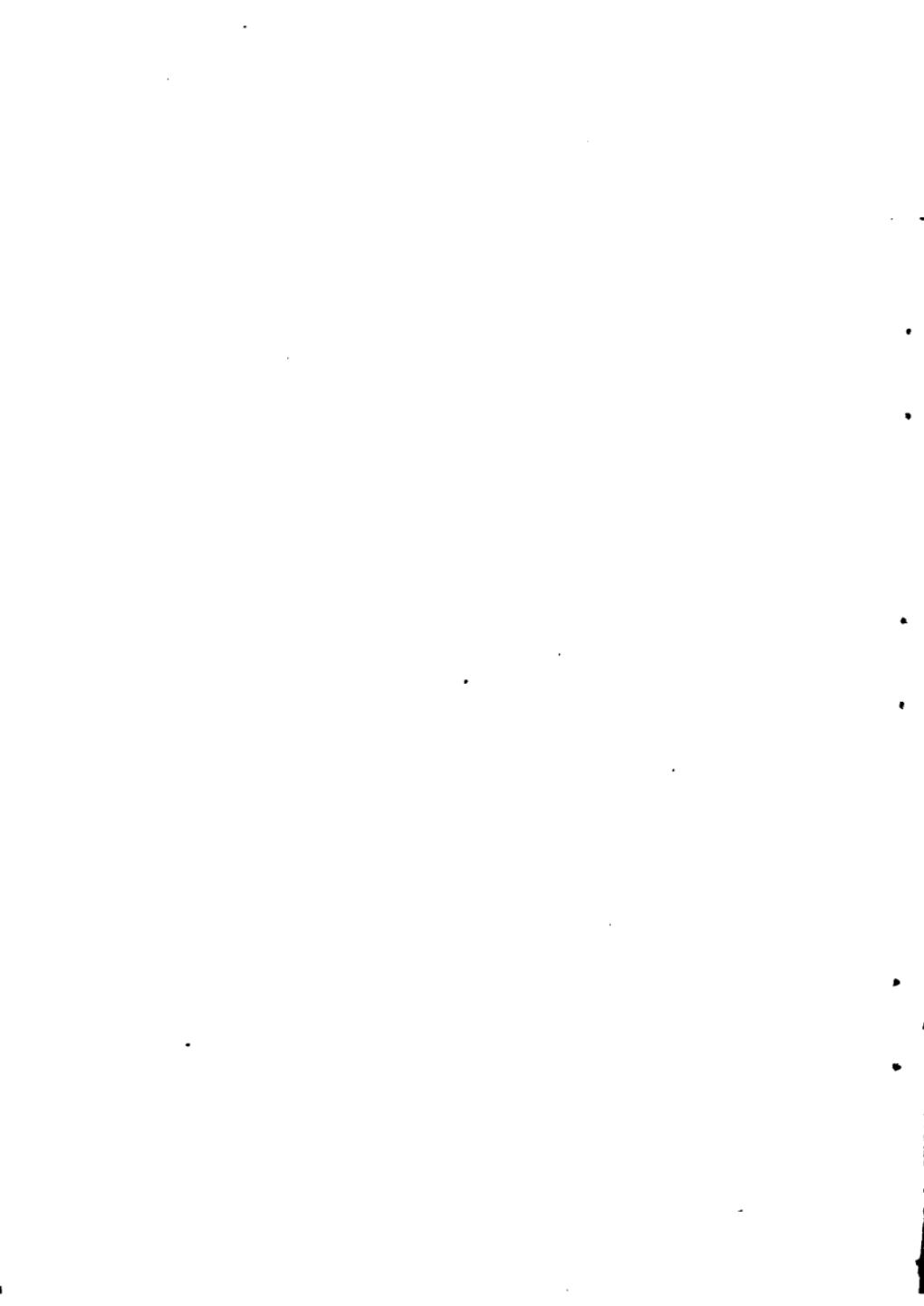
No ; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does those things. Well,—heaven 's above all ; and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

Iago.

It 's true, good lieutenant.

Cas.

For mine own part,—no offence to the general, nor any man of quality,—I hope to be saved.



Iago.

And so do I, too, lieutenant.

Cas.

Ay, but by your leave, not before me ; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this ; let's to our affairs.—Forgive us our sins!—Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk : this is my ancient ;—this is my right hand, and this is my left hand :—I am not drunk now ; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

All.

Excellent well.

Cas.

Why, very well, then ; you must not think, then, that I am drunk.

[*Exit Cassio.* *All except Iago and Montano laugh and follow Cassio.*

Iago.

You see this fellow that is gone before ;—
He is a soldier fit to stand by Cæsar
And give direction : and do but see his vice.
I fear the trust Othello puts him in,
On some odd time of his infirmity,
Will shake this island.

Mon.

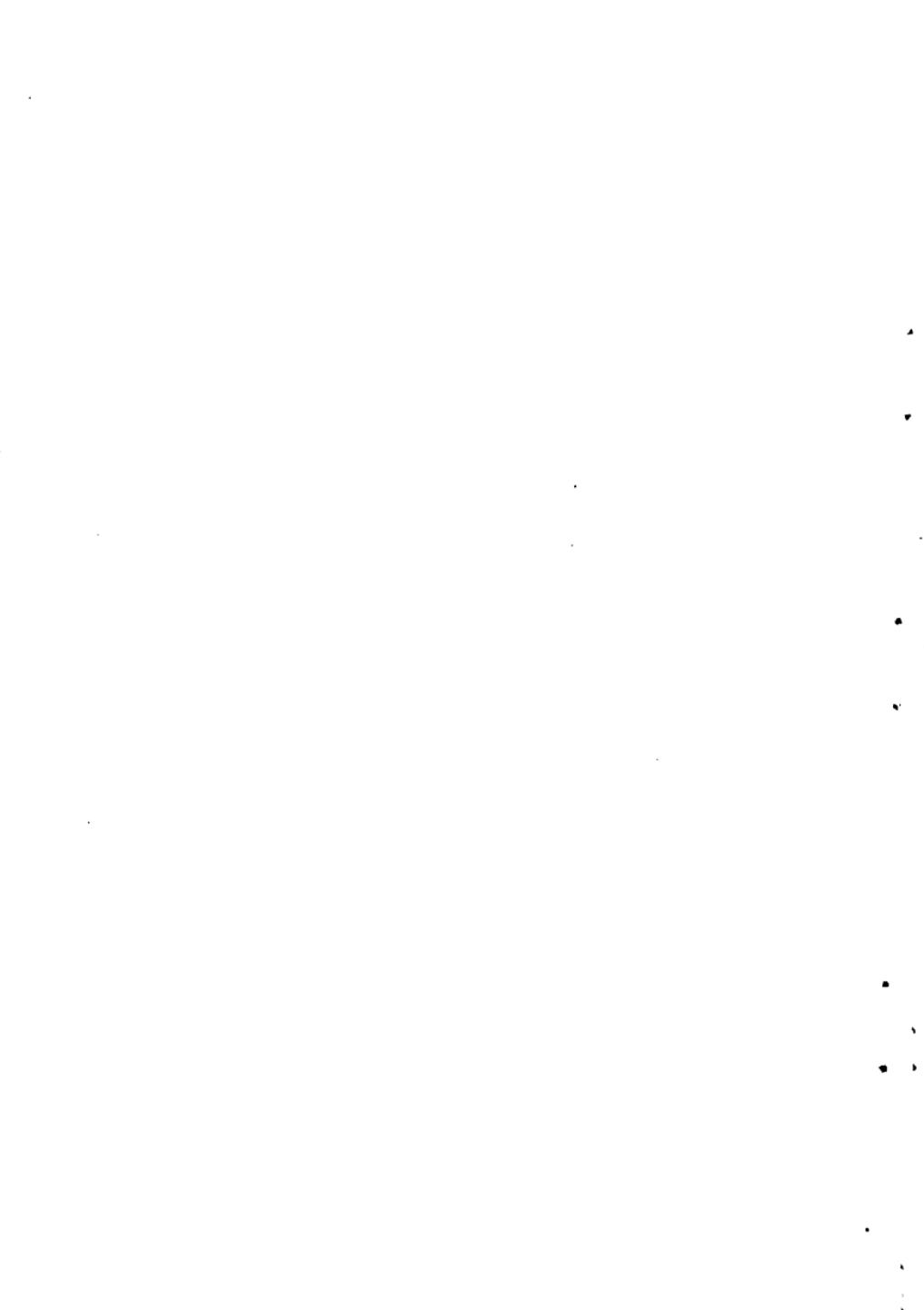
But is he often thus ?

Iago.

'T is evermore the prologue to his sleep :

Mon.

It were well
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps he sees it not ; or his good nature



Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,
And looks not on his evils: is not this true?

[Noise within.—Enter Roderigo R. I. E.

Iago.

[Aside to him.

How now, Roderigo!
I pray you, after the lieutenant, go.

[Exit Roderigo.

Mon.

And 't is great pity that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place as his own second,
With one of an ingraft infirmity:
It were an honest action to say so
To the Moor.

Iago.

Not I, for this fair island:
I do love Cassio well; and would do much
To cure him of this evil.—But, hark! what noise?

[Cry within, by Roderigo:

Rod.

Help! help!

[The scene is darkened.

[Re-enter Cassio, driving in Roderigo.

Cas.

You rogue! you rascal!

Mon.

What's the matter, lieutenant?

Cas.

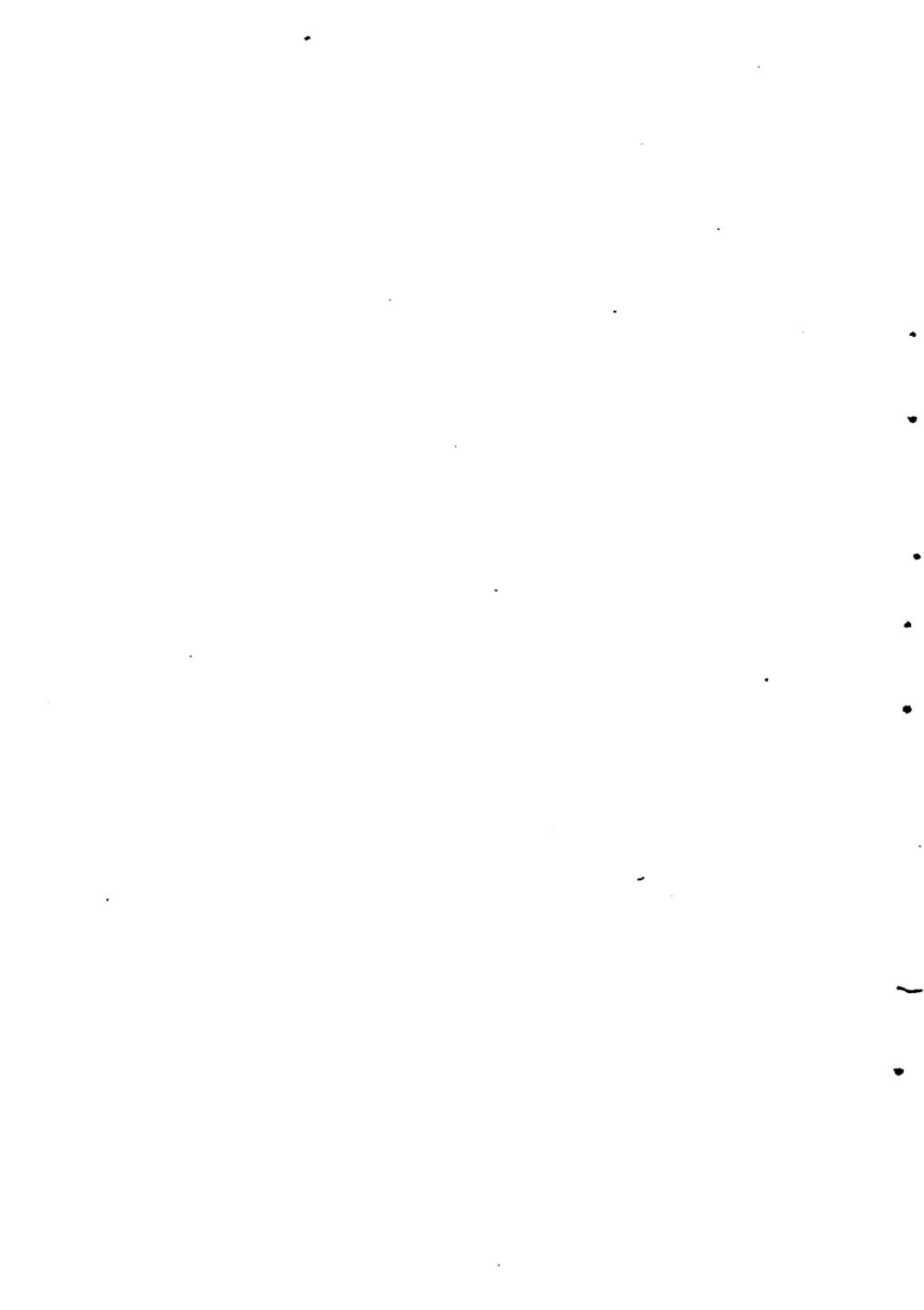
A knave!—teach me my duty!
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.

Rod.

Beat me!

Cas.

Dost thou prate, rogue?



Mon.[*Staying him.*

Nay, good lieutenant ;
I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

Cas.

Let me go, sir,
Or I'll knock you o'er the mazard.

Mon.

Come, come, you're drunk.

Cas.

Drunk !

[*They fight.**Iago.*[*Aside to Roderigo.*

Away, I say ;
Go out and cry a mutiny !

[*Exeunt Roderigo and Iago R.* *They then shout, outside :*

Rod. and Iago.

Mutiny ! Mutiny !

[*Then Iago immediately returns.*

Iago.

Nay, good lieutenant,— alas ! gentlemen ;—
Help, ho ! — Lieutenant,—sir,— Montano,—sir ;—
Help, masters ! — Here's a goodly watch, indeed !

[*Bell rings.*

Who's that that rings the bell ? — Diablo, ho !
The town will rise : heaven's will, lieutenant, hold !
You will be shamed for ever.

[*Enter Othello and Attendants, from castle, and also the populace, at back.* *Gentlemen also re-enter L.*

Oth. [*Bell continues to ring.*

What is the matter here ?
Hold, for your lives !
Why, how now, ho ! from whence ariseth this ?
Are we turned Turks, and to ourselves do that



Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites ?
 For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl :
 He that stirs next to carve for his own rage
 Holds his soul light ; he dies upon his motion.—
 Silence that dreadful bell ! it frights the isle
 From her propriety. [Exit an officer R.
 Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,
 Speak, who began this ? on thy love, I charge thee.
 [Bell stops ringing.]

Iago.

I do not know :—friends all but now, even now,
 In quarter, and in terms like bride and groom
 Divesting them for bed ; and then but now
 (As if some planet had unwitted men),
 Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,
 In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
 Any beginning to this peevish odds ;
 And would in action glorious I had lost
 These legs that brought me to a part of it !

Oth.

[To Cassio.]

How comes it, Michael, *you* are thus forgot ?

Cas.

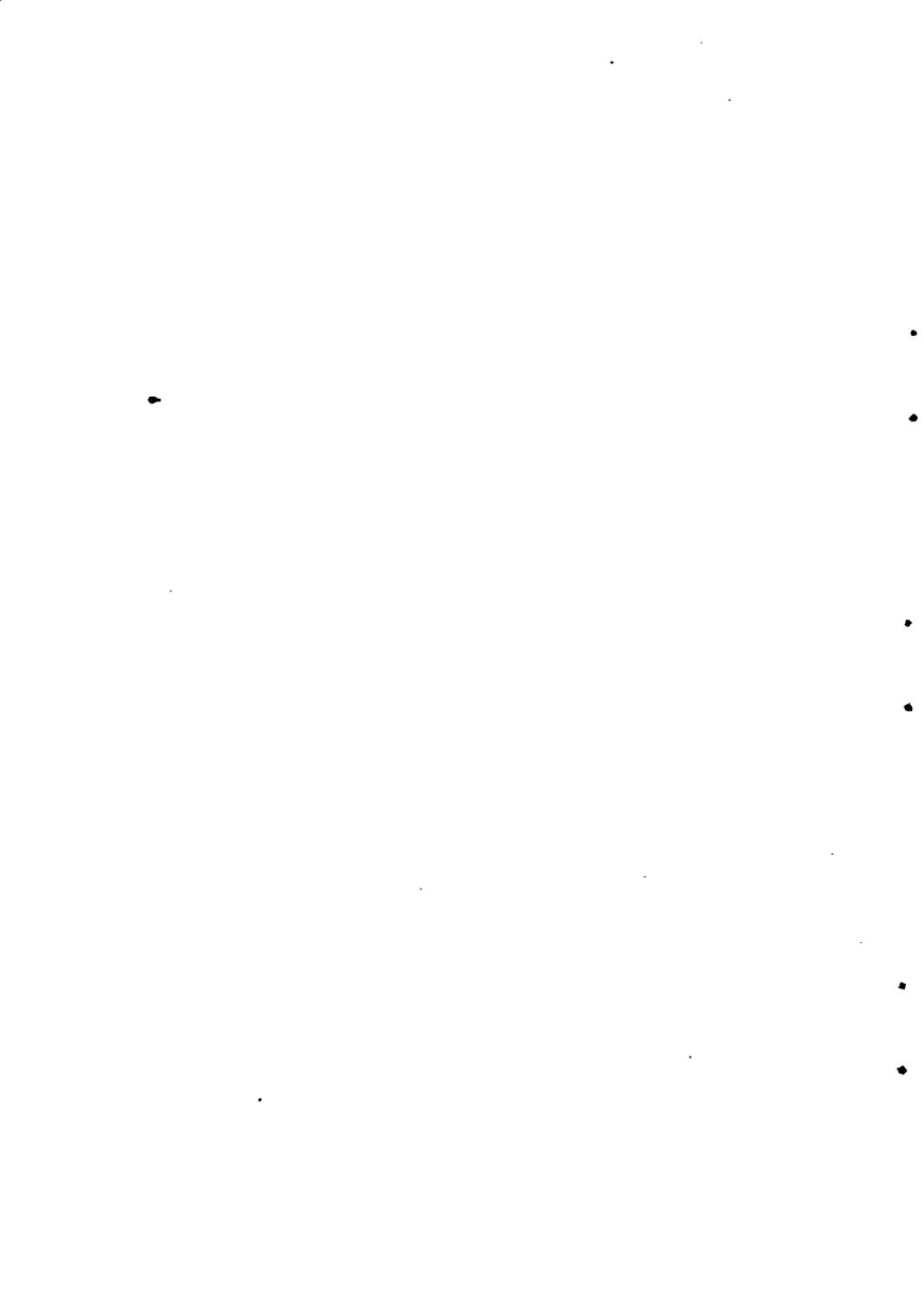
I pray you, pardon me ; I cannot speak.

Oth.

Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil ;
 The gravity and stillness of your youth
 The world hath noted, and your name is great
 In mouths of wisest censure ; what's the matter,
 That you unlace your reputation thus,
 And spend your rich opinion for the name
 Of a night brawler ? give me answer to it.

Mon.

Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger :
 Your officer, Iago, can inform you,—



While I spare speech, which something now offends me,—
 Of all that I do know: nor know I aught
 By me that's said or done amiss this night;
 Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,
 And to defend ourselves it be a sin
 When violence assails us.

Oth.

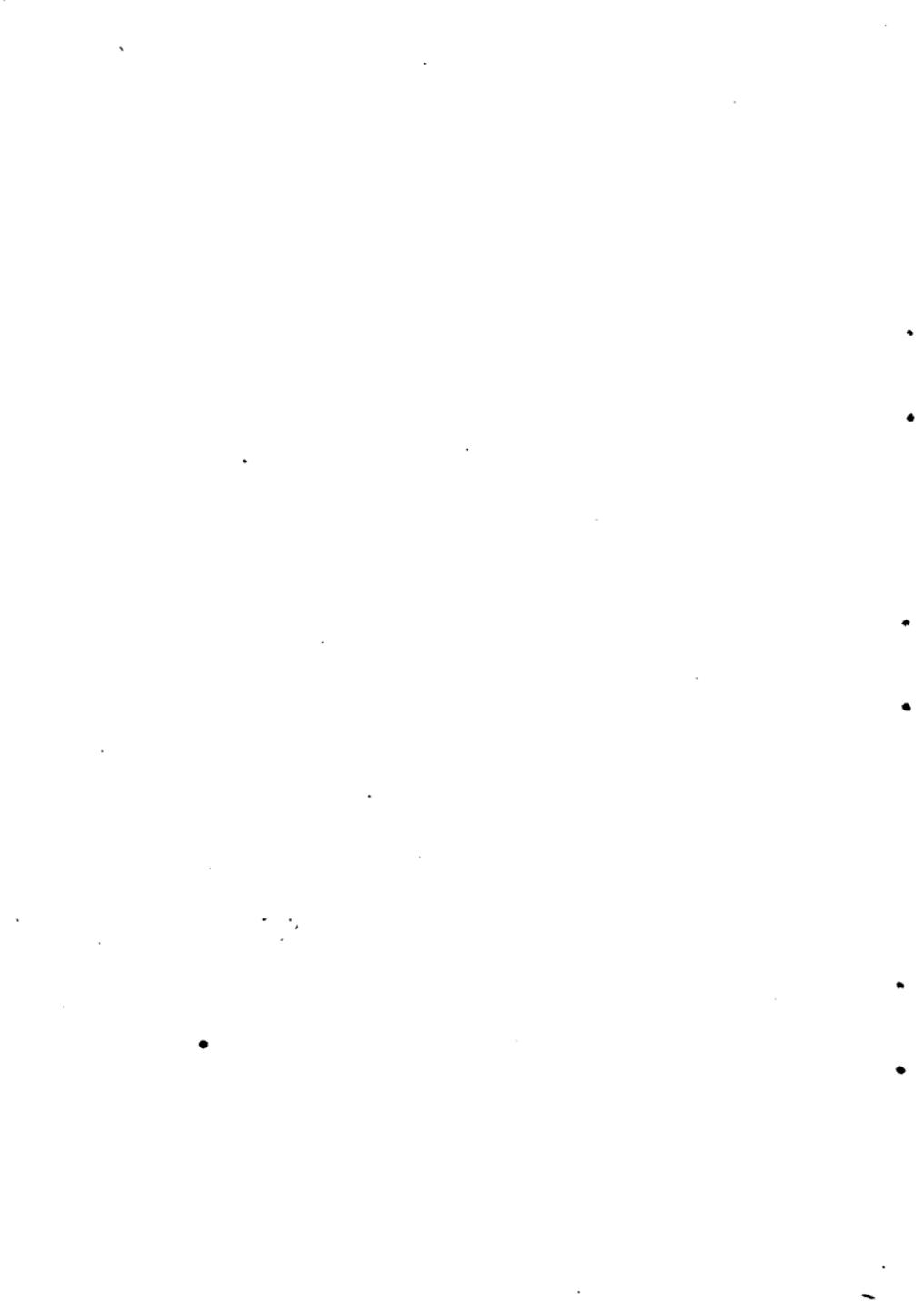
Now, by heaven,
 My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
 And passion, having my best judgment collied,
 Assays to lead the way:—if I once stir,
 Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
 Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
 How this foul rout began, who set it on;
 And he that is approved in this offence,
 Though he had twinned with me, both at a birth,
 Shall lose me.—What! in a town of war,
 Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
 To manage private and domestic quarrel,
 In night, and on the court and guard of safety!
 'T is monstrous.—Iago, who began it?

Mon.

If partially affined or leagued in office,
 Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
 Thou art no soldier.

Iago.

Touch me not so near:
 I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth
 Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;
 Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
 Shall nothing wrong him.—Thus it is, general.
 Montano and myself being in speech,
 There comes a fellow crying out for help;
 And Cassio following him with determined sword,
 To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
 Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause:
 Myself the crying fellow did pursue,



Lest by his clamour (as it so fell out)
 The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot,
 Outran my purpose; and I returned, the rather
 For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
 And Cassio high in oath; which till to-night
 I ne'er might say before. When I came back
 (For this was brief), I found them close together,
 At blow and thrust; even as again they were
 When you yourself did part them.

More of this matter can I not report:—
 But men are men; the best sometimes forget:—
 Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,—
 As men in rage strike those that wish them best,—
 Yet, surely, Cassio, I believe, received
 From him that fled some strange indignity,
 Which patience could not pass.

Oth.

I know, Iago,
 Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
 Making it light to Cassio.—
 Cassio, I love thee;
 But never more be officer of mine.—

[*To Montano.*

Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon:
 Lead him off. [*Montano is led off.*]
 Iago, look with care about the town,
 And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.—
 Michael, I'll make thee an example. [*To Cassio.*]

[*Exeunt all except Iago and Cassio.*

Iago.

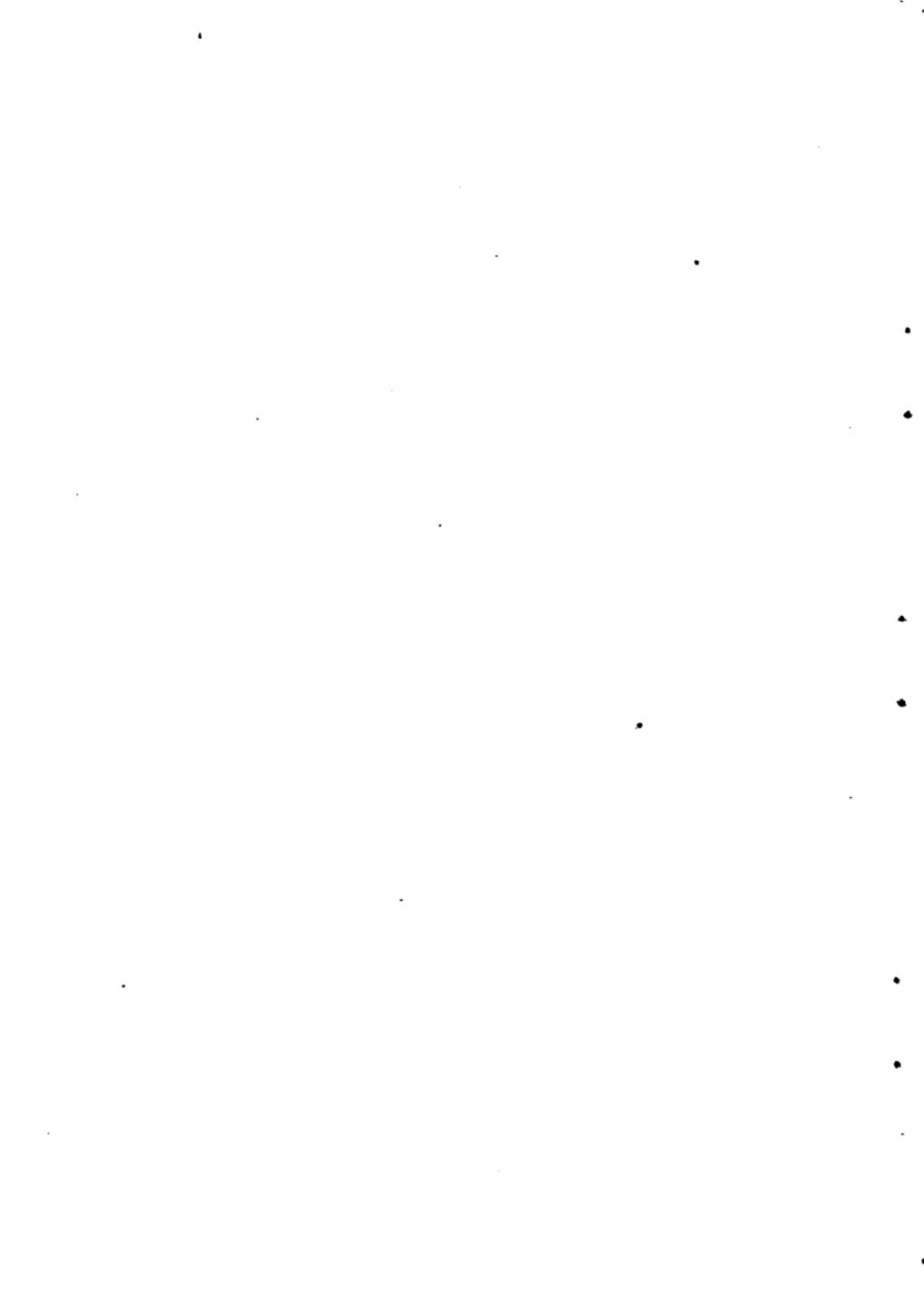
What! are you hurt, lieutenant?

Cas.

Ay, past all surgery.

Iago.

Marry, Heaven forbid!



Cas.

Reputation, reputation, reputation ! O, I have lost my reputation ! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial.—My reputation, Iago, my reputation !

Iago.

As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound ; there is more offence in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition ; oft got without merit, and lost without deserving : you have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man ! there are ways to recover the general again : sue to him again, and he's yours.

Cas.

I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk ? and squabble ? swagger ? swear ? and discourse fustian with one's own shadow ?—O, thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil !

Iago.

What was he that you followed with your sword ? What had he done to you ?

Cas.

I know not.

Iago.

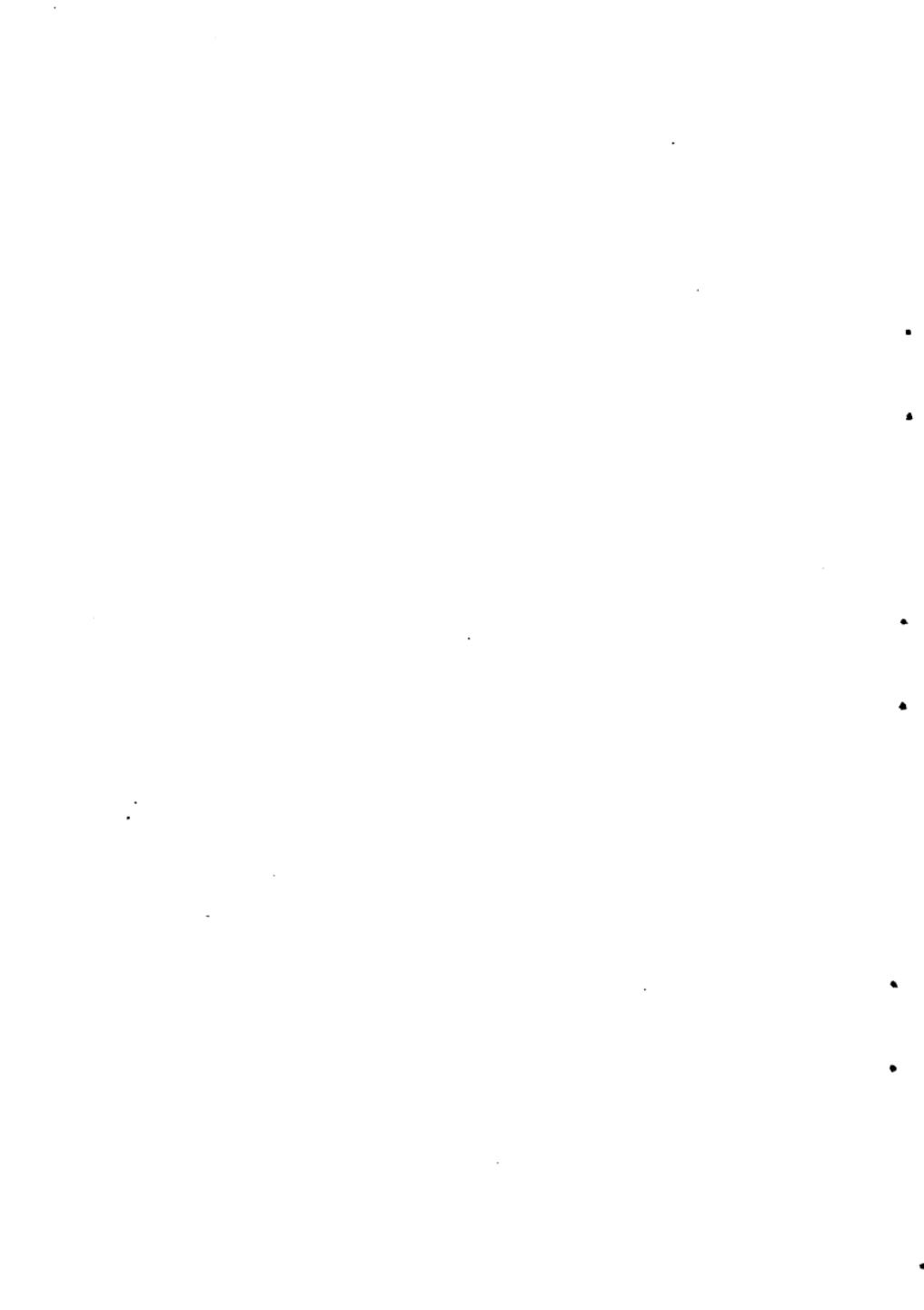
Is 't possible ?

Cas.

I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly ; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore.—O, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains !

Iago.

Why, but you are now well enough : how came you thus recovered ?



Cas.

It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath: one unperfectness shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

Iago.

I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

Cas.

I will ask him for my place again,—he shall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O, strange! — Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil.

Iago.

Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used: exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

Cas.

I have well approved it, sir.—I drunk!

Iago.

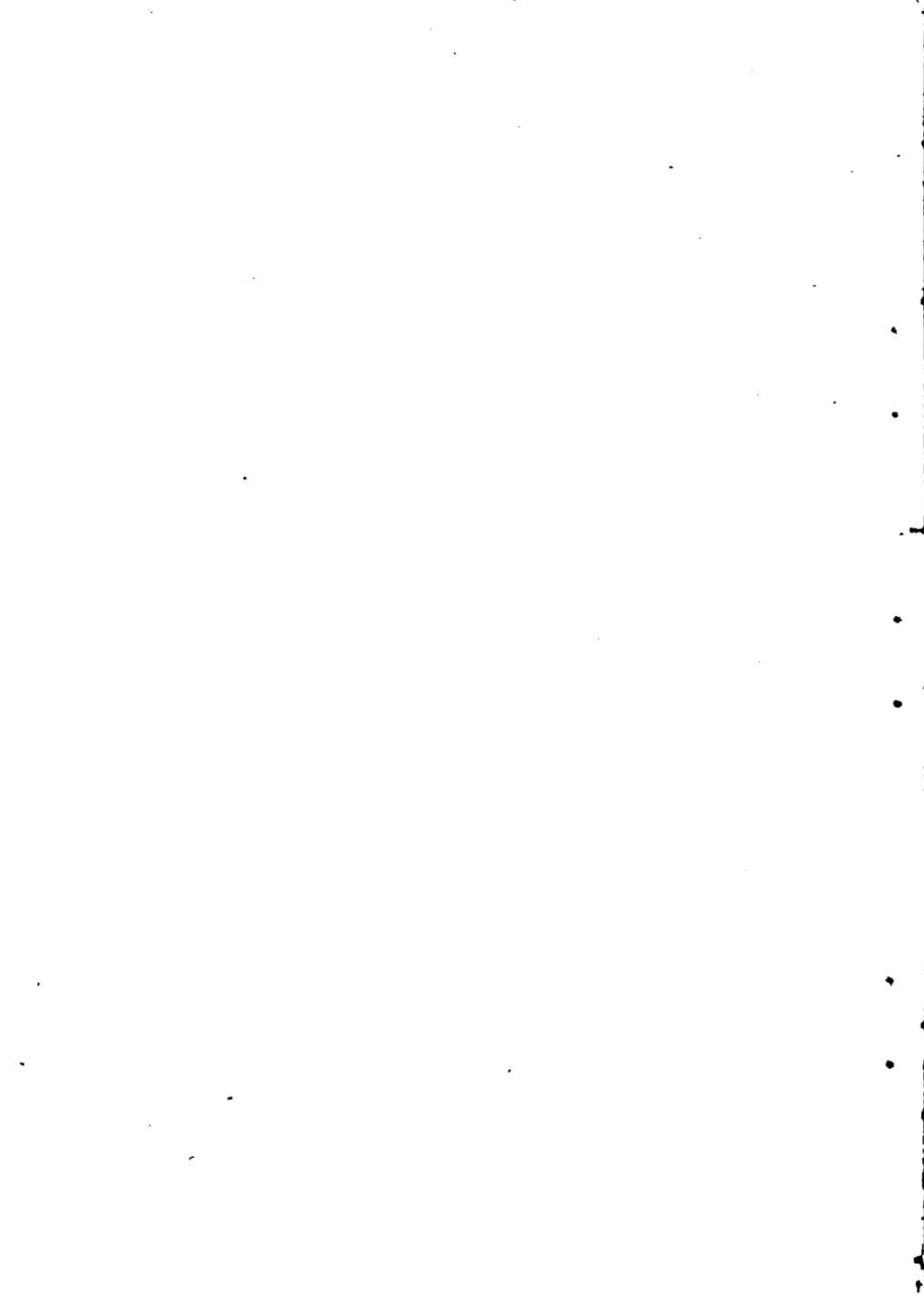
You or any man living may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general: confess yourself freely to her; importune her; she'll help to put you in your place again: she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested.

Cas.

You advise me well.

Iago.

I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.



Cas.

I think it freely ; and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me : I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me here.

Iago.

You are in the right. Good-night, lieutenant.

Cas.

Good-night, honest Iago.

[*Exit L.*

Iago.

And what 's he, then, that says I play the villain ?

When this advice is free I give, and honest,

Probal to thinking, and, indeed, the course

To win the Moor again ?

How am I, then, a villain

To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,

Directly to his good ? Divinity of hell !

When devils will the blackest sins put on,

They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,

As I do now : for while this honest fool

Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,

And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,

I 'll pour this pestilence into his ear,—

That she repeals him for her wantonness ;

And by how much she strives to do him good,

She shall undo her credit with the Moor.

So will I turn her virtue into pitch ;

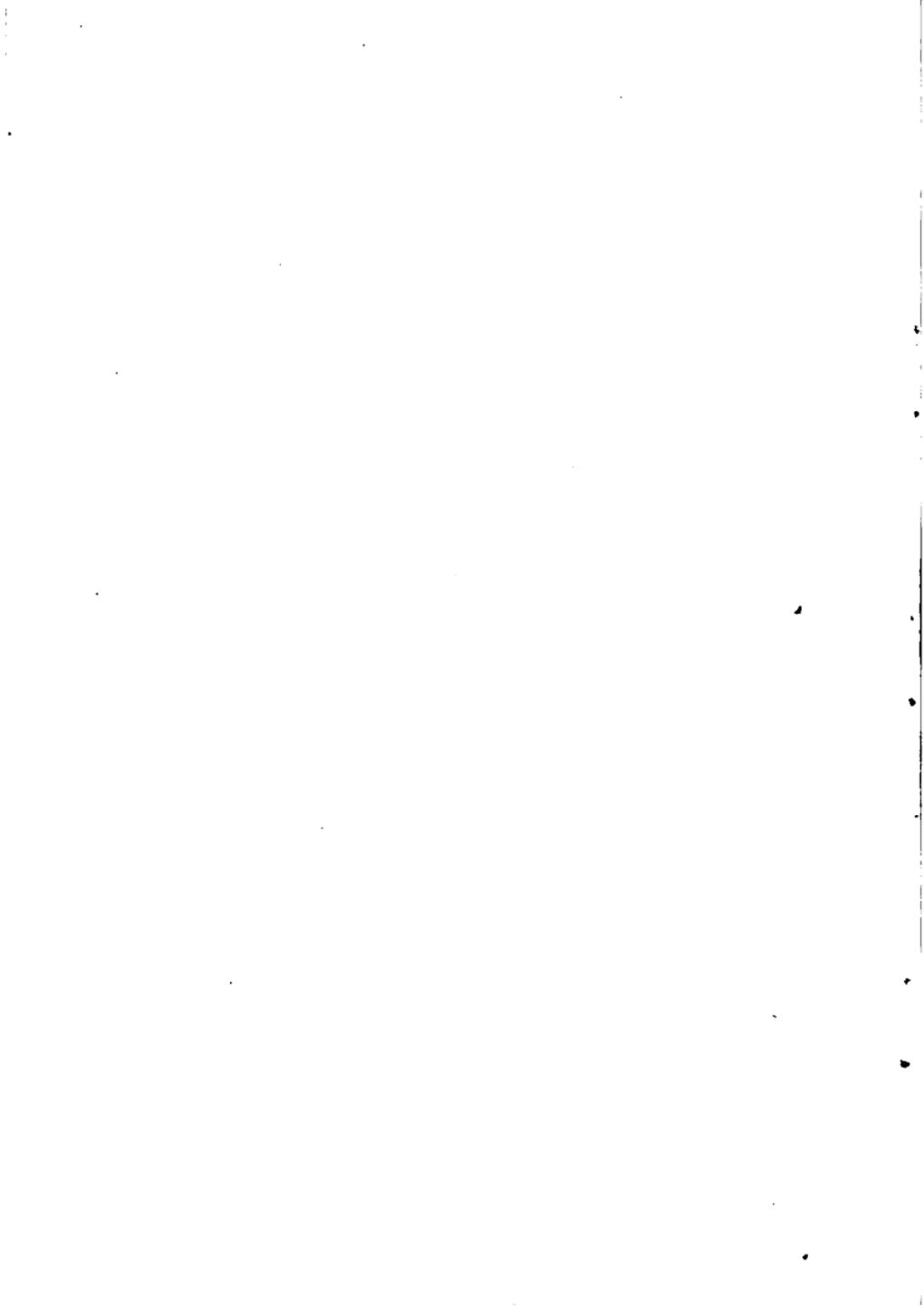
And out of her own goodness make the net

That shall enmesh them all.

[*The scene gradually grows lighter.—Enter Roderigo.*
How now, Roderigo !

Rod.

I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost spent ; I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgelled ; and I think the issue will be—I shall have so much experience for my pains ; and so, with no money at all, and a little more wit, return again to Venice.



Iago.

How poor are they that have not patience !
What wound did ever heal but by degrees ?
Thou know'st we work by wit, and not by witchcraft ;
And wit depends on dilatory time.
Does 't not go well ? Cassio hath beaten thee,
And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashiered Cassio :
Content thyself awhile.— By the mass, 't is morning ;
Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.—
Retire thee ; go where thou art billeted :
Away, I say ; thou shalt know more hereafter :
Nay, get thee gone.

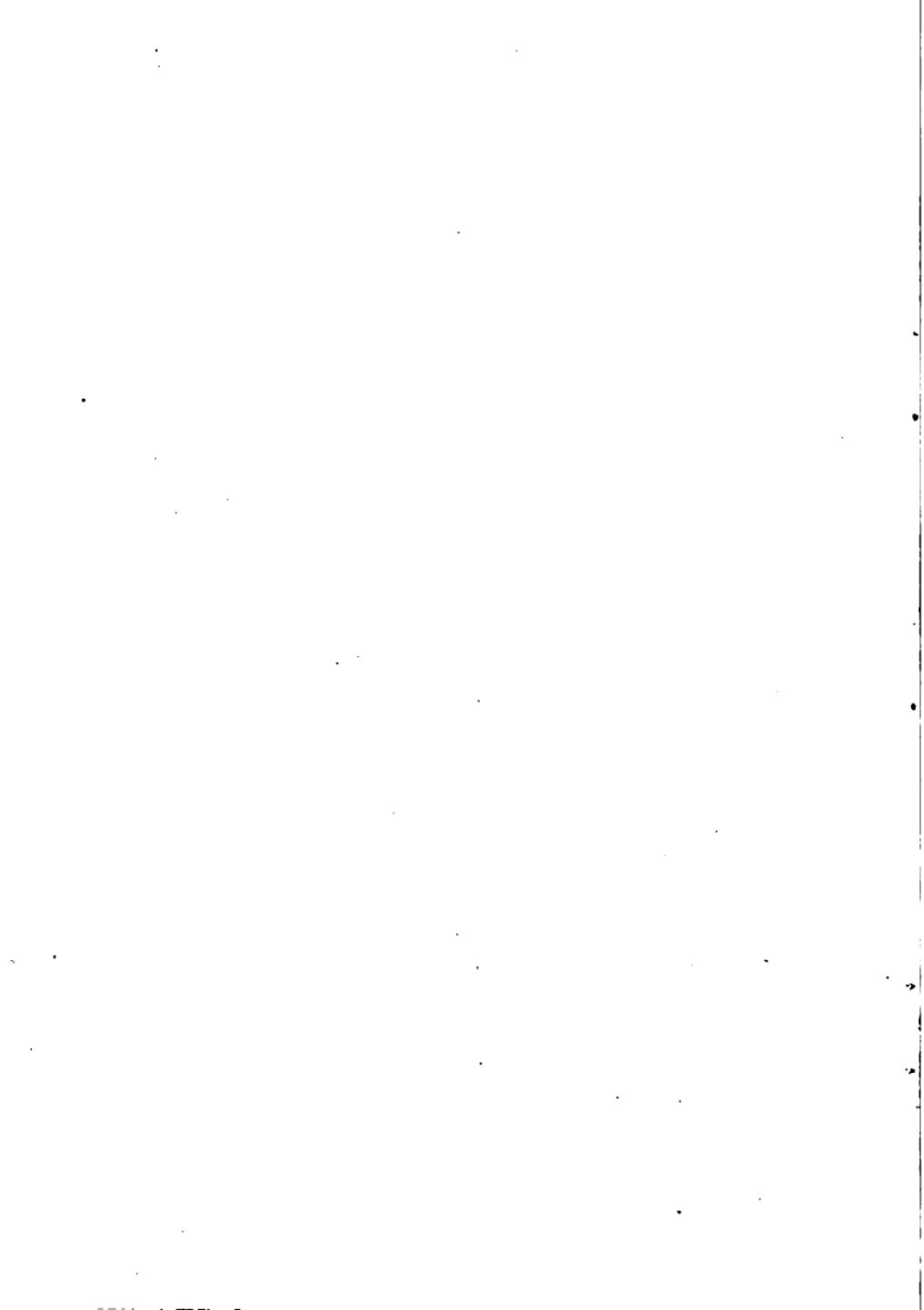
[*Exit Roderigo.*

Two things are to be done,—
My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress ;
I 'll set her on ;
Myself the while to draw the Moor apart,
And bring him jump when he may Cassio find
Soliciting his wife :— ay, that 's the way ;
Dull not device by coldness and delay.

[*Exit.*

CURTAIN.





Act Third.

Scene First. { BEFORE THE CASTLE, AS IN ACT SECOND.
DESDEMONA, SEATED, AND CASSIO AND
EMILIA DISCOVERED.

Des.

Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

Emil.

Good madam, do : I warrant it grieves my husband,
As if the case were his.

Des.

O, that's an honest fellow.— Do not doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

Cas.

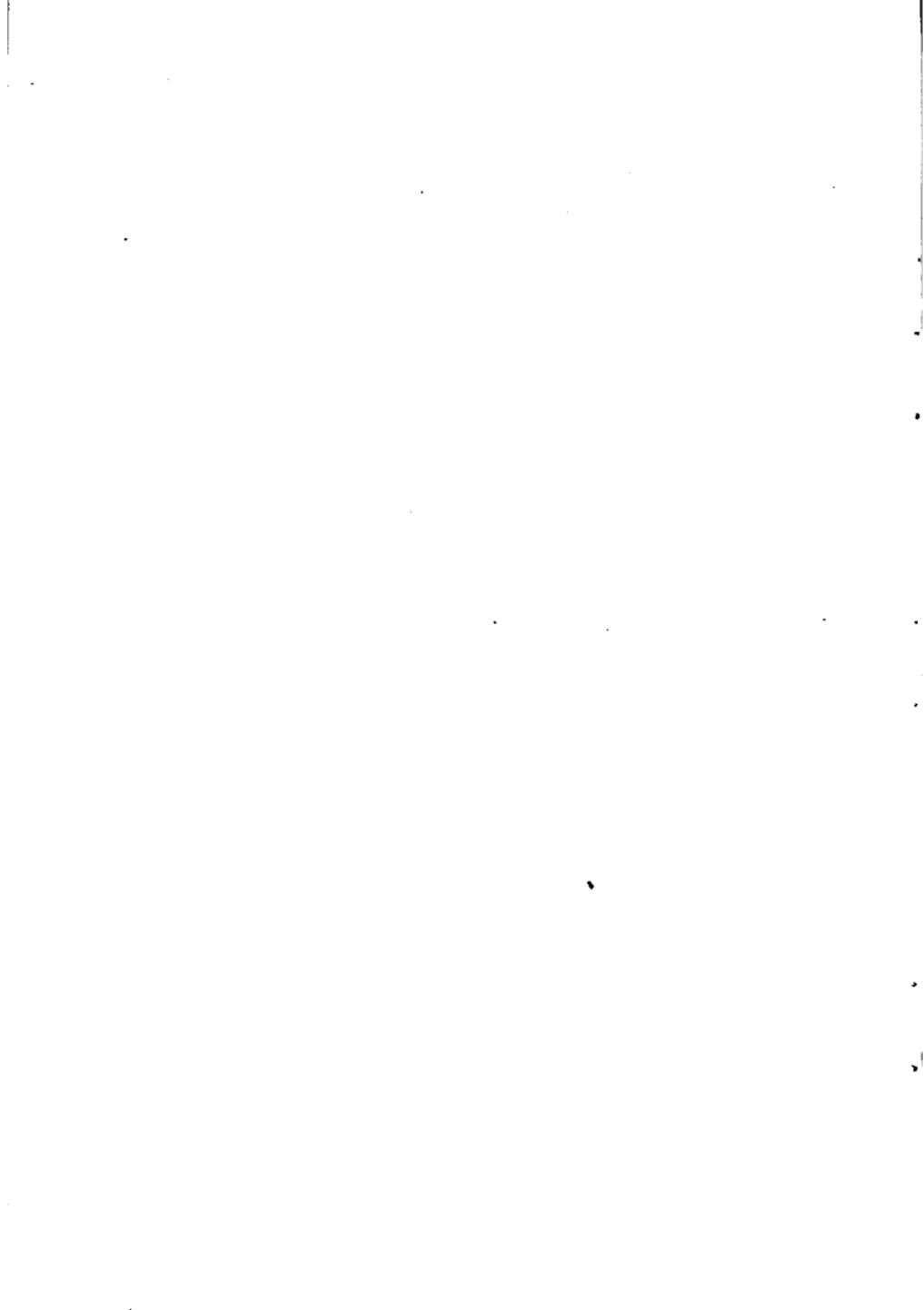
Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never anything but your true servant.

Des.

I know 't,— I thank you. You do love my lord :
You have known him long ; and be you well assured
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politic distance.

Cas.

Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That, I being absent, and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.



Des.

Do not doubt that; before Emilia here
 I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee,
 If I do vow a friendship, I 'll perform it
 To the last article: my lord shall never rest;
 I 'll watch him tame, and talk him out of patience;
 I 'll intermingle everything he does
 With Cassio's suit: therefore be merry, Cassio;
 For thy solicitor shall rather die
 Than give thy cause away.

Emil.

Madam, here comes my lord.

Cas.

Madam, I 'll take my leave.

Des.

Why, stay and hear me speak.

Cas.

Madam, not now; I am very ill at ease,
 Unfit for mine own purposes.

Des.

Well, do your discretion.

[*Exit Cassio L.* *Enter Othello and Iago, at back.*

Iago.

Ha! I like not that.

Oth.

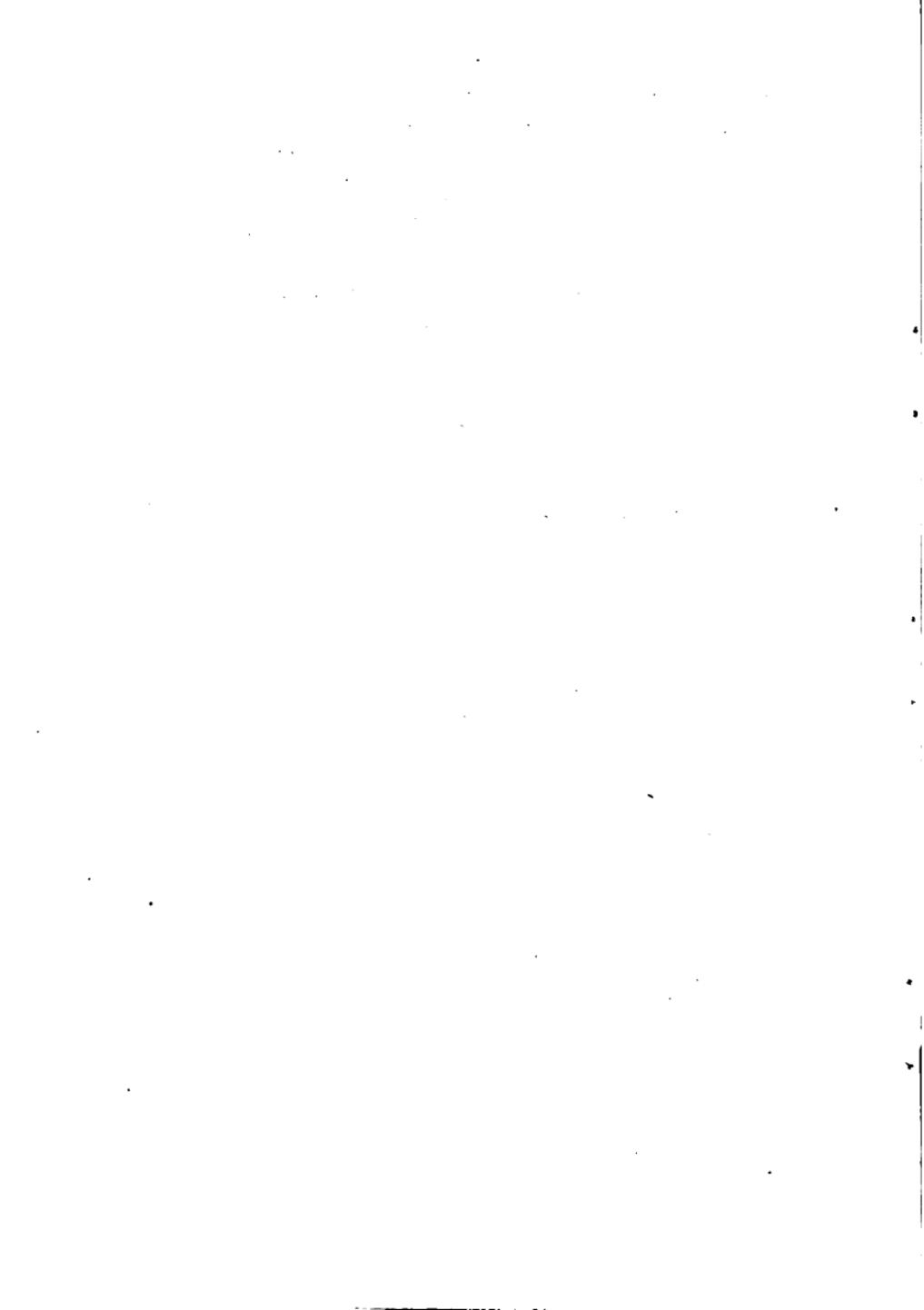
What dost thou say?

Iago.

Nothing, my lord: or if—I know not what.

Oth.

Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?



Iago.

Cassio, my lord ! No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.

Oth.

I do believe 't was he.

[*Exeunt Iago and Emilia.*

Des.

How now, my lord !
I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

Oth.

Who is 't you mean ?

Des.

Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take ;
For if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,
I have no judgment in an honest face :
I pr'ythee, call him back.

Oth.

Went he hence now ?

Des.

Ay, sooth ; so humbled,
That he hath left part of his grief with me,
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

Oth.

Not now, sweet Desdemona ; some other time.

Des.

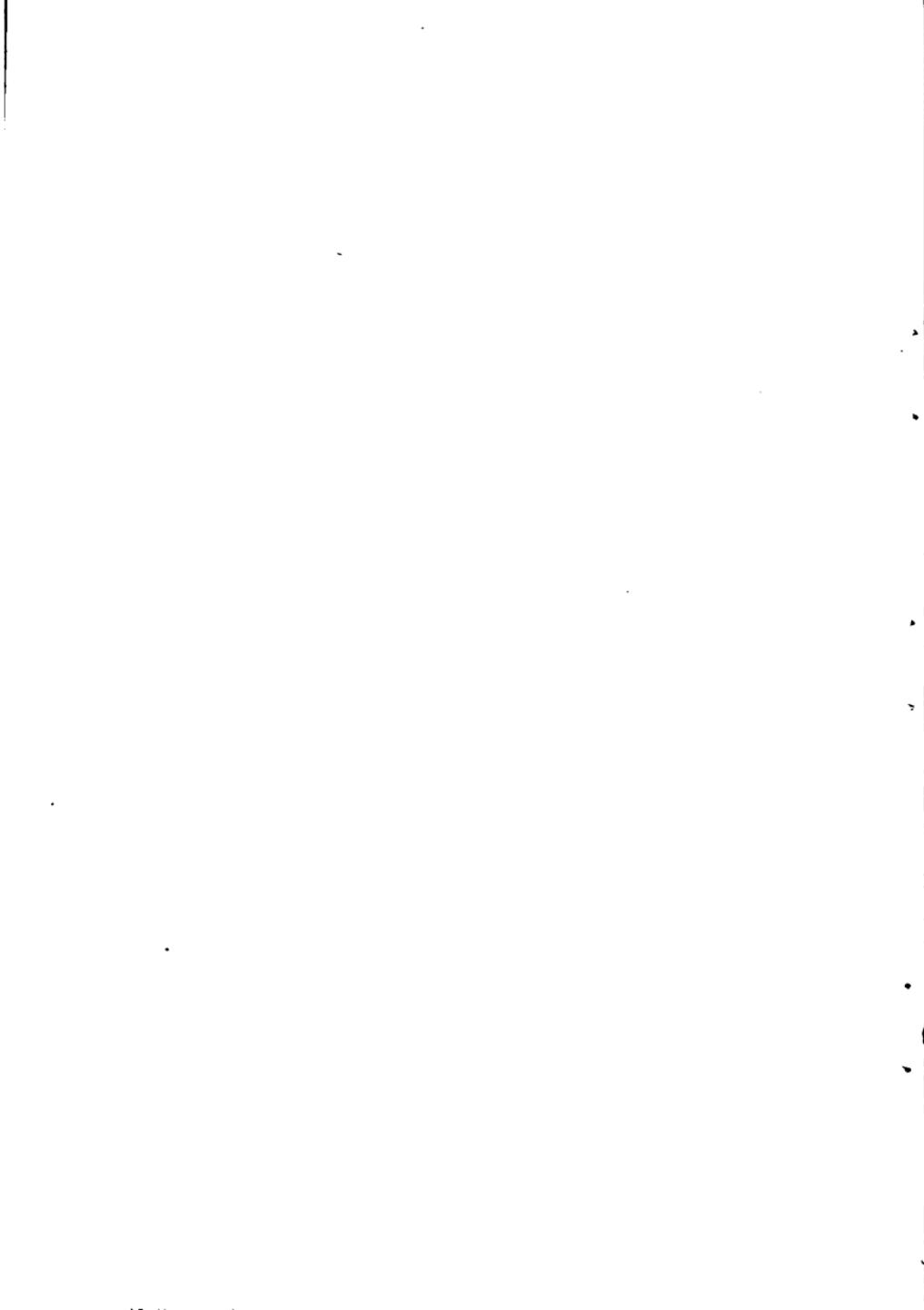
But shall 't be shortly ?

Oth.

The sooner, sweet, for you.

Des.

Shall 't be to-night at supper ?



Oth.

No, not to-night.

Des.

To-morrow dinner, then ?

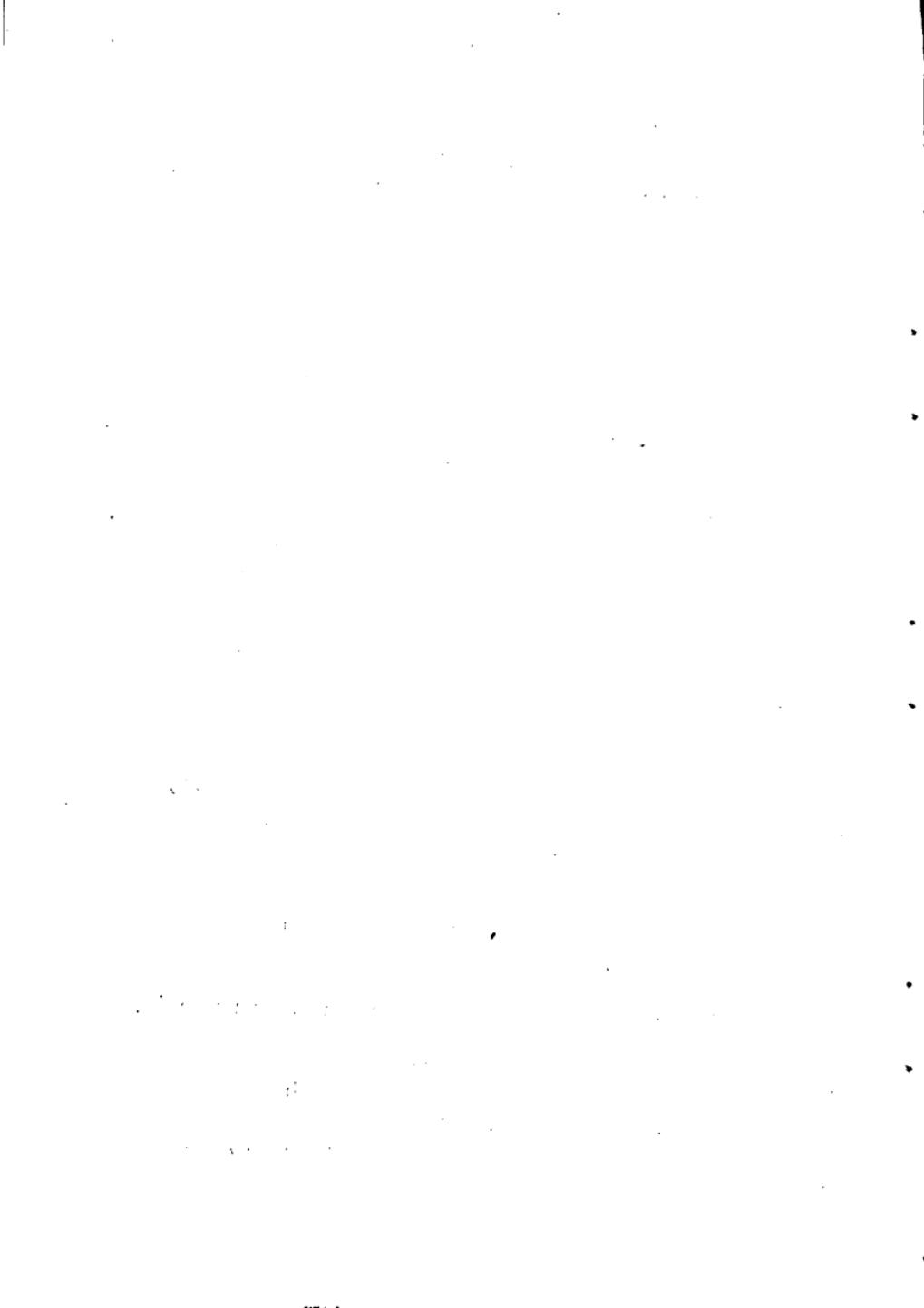
*Oth.*I shall not dine at home ;
I meet the captains at the citadel.*Des.*Why, then, to-morrow night, or Tuesday morn ;
On Tuesday noon, or night ; on Wednesday morn :—
I pr'ythee, name the time ; but let it not
Exceed three days : in faith, he's penitent ;
When shall he come ?Tell me, Othello : I wonder in my soul,
What you could ask me, that I should deny,
Or stand soammering on. What ! Michael Cassio,
That came a-wooing with you ; and so many a time,
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,
Hath ta'en your part ; to have so much to do
To bring him in. Trust me, I could do much —*Oth.*Pr'ythee, no more : let him come when he will ;
I will deny thee nothing. [Re-enter *Iago and Emilia*.
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.*Des.*

Shall I deny you ? no : farewell, my lord.

Oth.

Farewell, my Desdemona : I 'll come to thee straight.

*Des.*Emilia, come.— Be as your fancies teach you.
Whate'er you be, I am obedient.[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia*.]



Oth.

Excellent wretch ! Perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee ! and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.

[Sits.]

Iago.

My noble lord —

Oth.

What dost thou say, Iago ?

Iago.

Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my lady,
Know of your love ?

Oth.

He did, from first to last : why dost thou ask ?

Iago.

But for a satisfaction of my thought ;
No further harm.

Oth.

Why of thy thought, Iago ?

Iago.

I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

Oth.

O, yes ; and went between us very oft.

Iago.

Indeed !

Oth.

Indeed ! ay, indeed :—discern'st thou aught in that ?
Is he not honest ?

Iago.

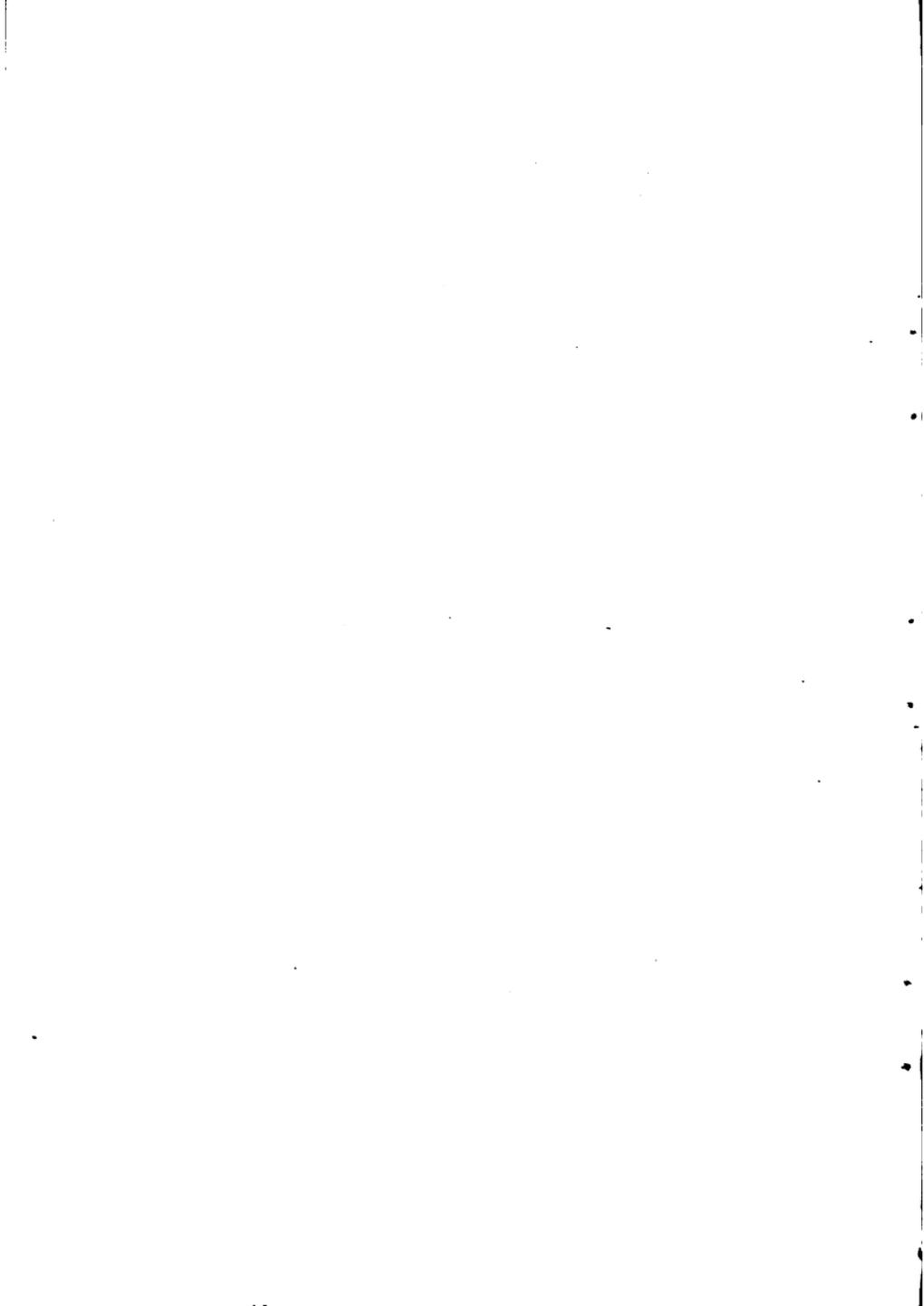
Honest, my lord !

Oth.

Honest ! ay, honest.

Iago.

My lord, for aught I know.



Oth.

What dost thou think ?

Iago.

Think, my lord !

Oth.

Think, my lord !

By heaven, he echoes me,
 As if there were some monster in his thought
 Too hideous to be shown.— Thou dost mean something:

[Rises.]

I heard thee say but now,— thou lik'dst not that,
 When Cassio left my wife : what didst not like ?
 And when I told thee he was of my counsel
 In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst “ Indeed ! ”
 And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
 As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
 Some horrible conceit : if thou dost love me,
 Show me thy thought.

Iago.

My lord, you know I love you.

Oth.

I think thou dost ;
 And,—for I know, thou 'rt full of love and honesty,
 And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath,—
 Therefore, these stops of thine fright me the more :
 For such things in a false, disloyal knave
 Are tricks of custom ; but in a man that 's just
 They 're close delations, working from the heart,
 That passion cannot rule.

Iago.

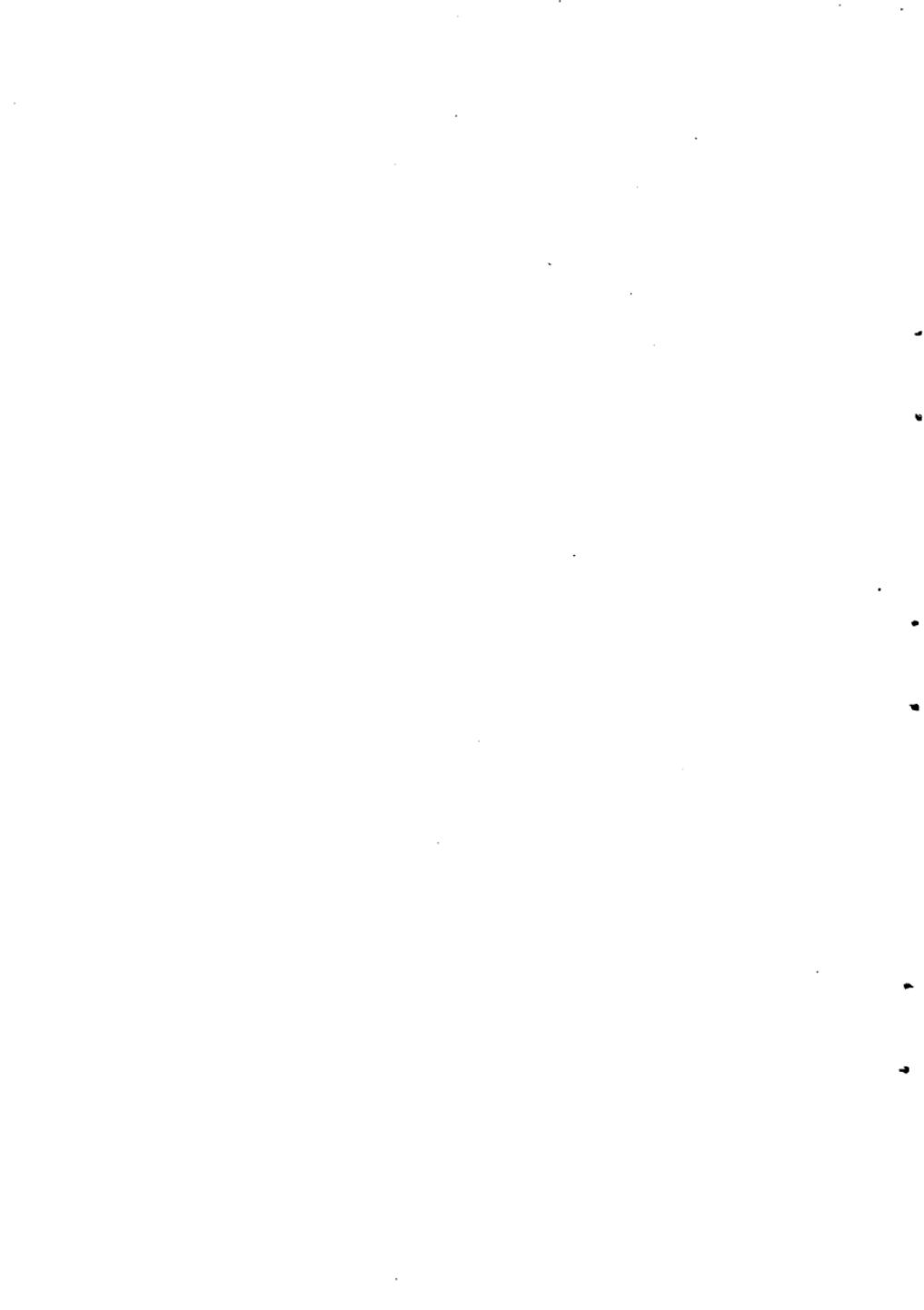
For Michael Cassio,
 I dare be sworn, I think, that he is honest.

Oth.

I think so, too.

Iago.

Men should be what they seem ;
 Or, those that be not, would they might seem none !



Oth.

Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago.

Why, then, I think Cassio 's an honest man.

Oth.

Nay, yet there 's more in this :

I pr'ythee speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate ; and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

Iago.

Good my lord, pardon me :

Though I am bound to every act of duty,
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.
Utter my thoughts ? Why, say they are vile and false,—
As where 's that palace whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not ?

Oth.

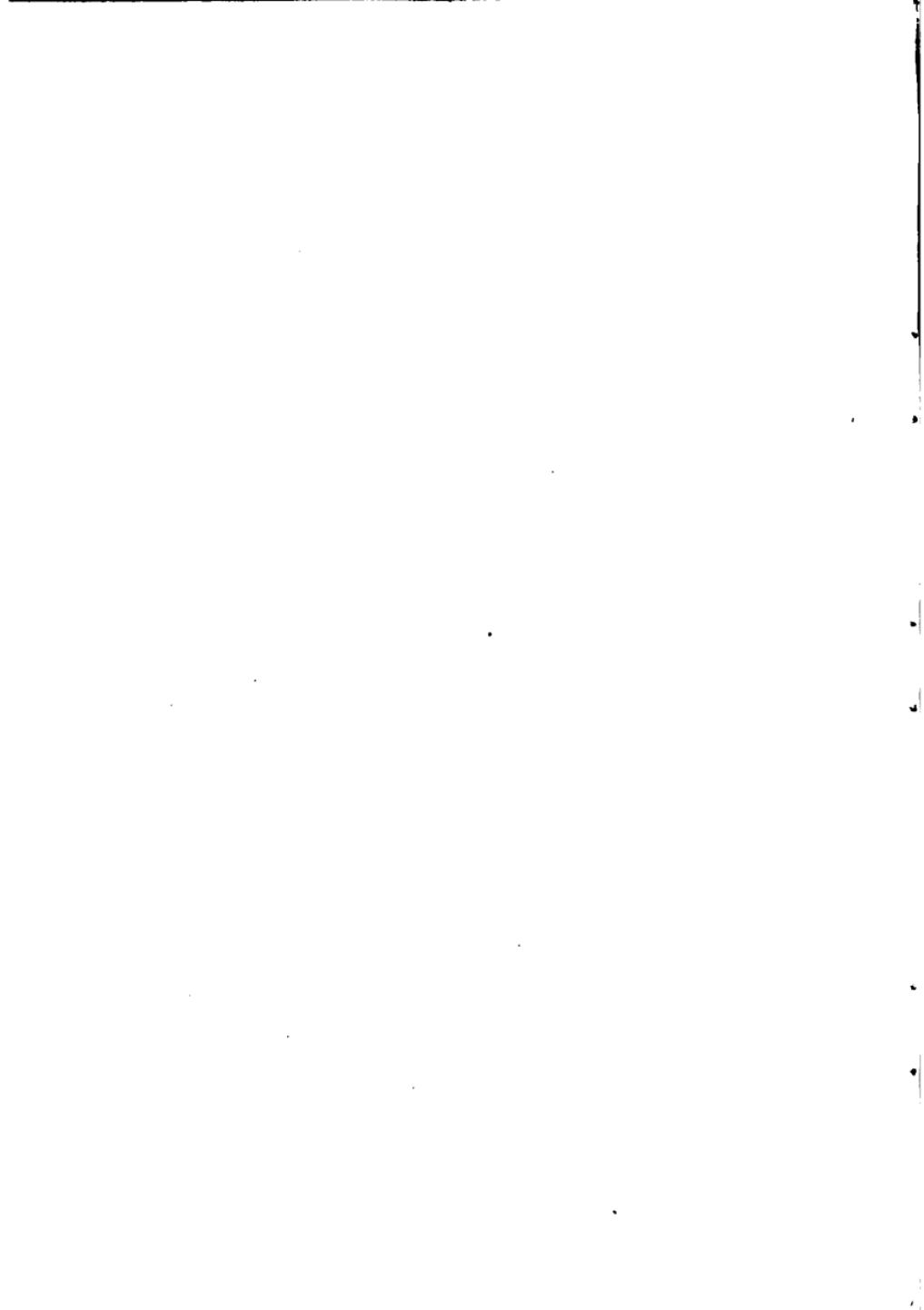
Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
If thou but think'st him wronged, and mak'st his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago.

I do beseech you,—
Though I, perchance, am vicious in my guess,
[As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses, and of my jealousy
Shape faults that are not], that your wisdom
From one that so imperfectly conceits,
Would take no notice ; nor build yourself a trouble
Out of his scattering and unsure observance.
It were not for your quiet nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.

Oth.

What dost thou mean ?



Iago.

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls :
Who steals my purse, steals trash ; 't is something, nothing ;
'T was mine, 't is his, and has been slave to thousands ;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

Oth.

By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

Iago.

You cannot, if my heart were in your hand ;
Nor shall not, whilst 't is in my custody.

Oth.

Ha !

Iago.

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy ;
It is the green-eyed monster, which doth make
The meat it feeds on :
He lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger ;
But O ! what damnèd minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts ; suspects, yet strongly loves !

Oth.

O, misery !

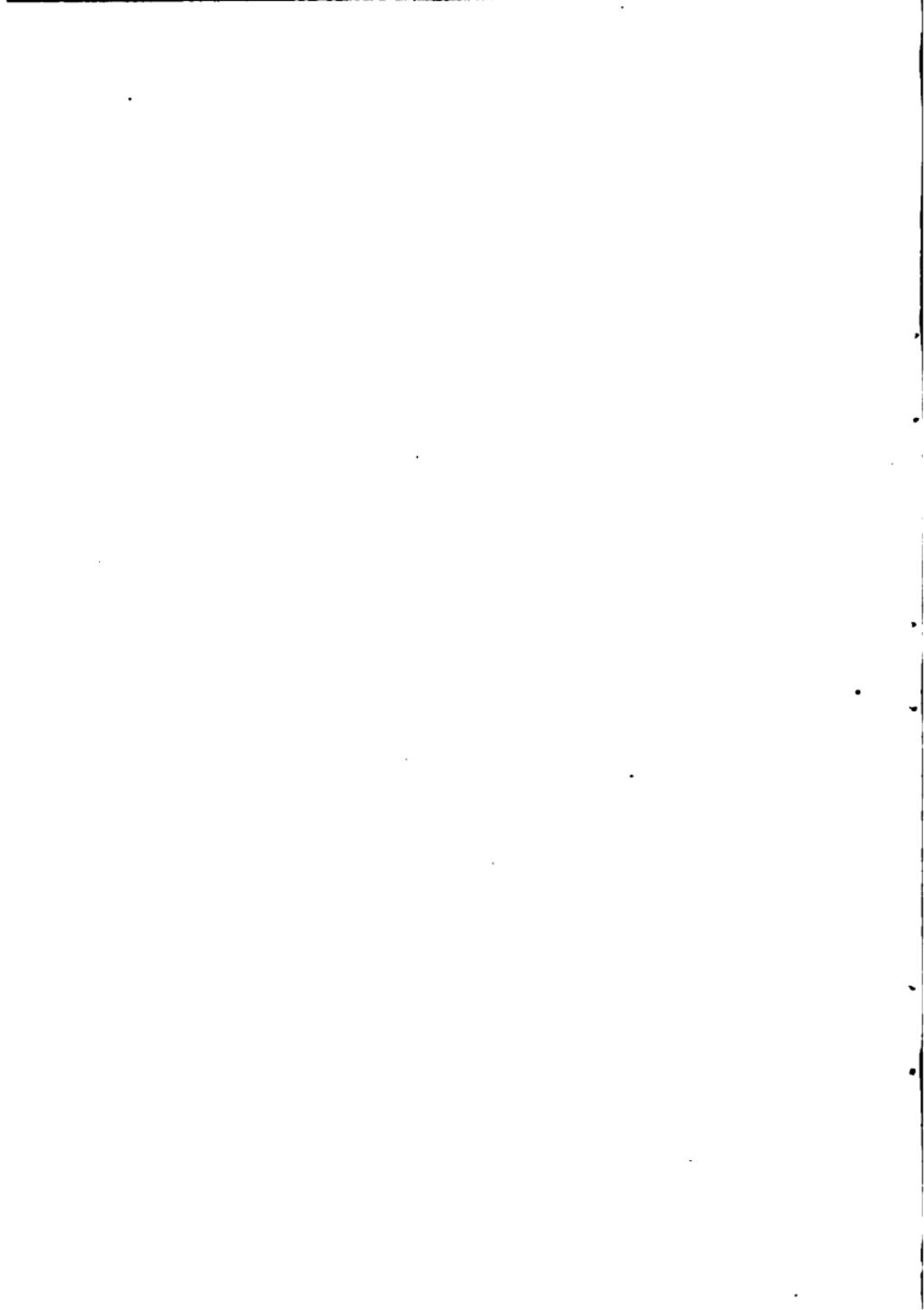
[Spoken without reference to himself.]

Iago.

Poor and content is rich, and rich enough ;
But riches fineless is as poor as winter
To him that ever fears he shall be poor :—
Good Heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy !

[A pause.]

[Spoken slowly, and with significance.] Othello
now, for the first time, begins to be conscious
of a doubt—which, however, he immediately
shakes off, and he turns to Iago with a clear front.



Oth.

Why, why is this?

Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved.

'T is not to make me jealous,
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And, on the proof, there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love, or jealousy!

Iago.

I am glad of this; for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,
Receive it from me:—I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;
Wear your eye thus, not jealous, nor secure:
I would not have your free and noble nature,
Out of self-bounty, be abused; look to't:
I know our country disposition well;
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
Is not to leave undone, but keep unknown.

Oth.

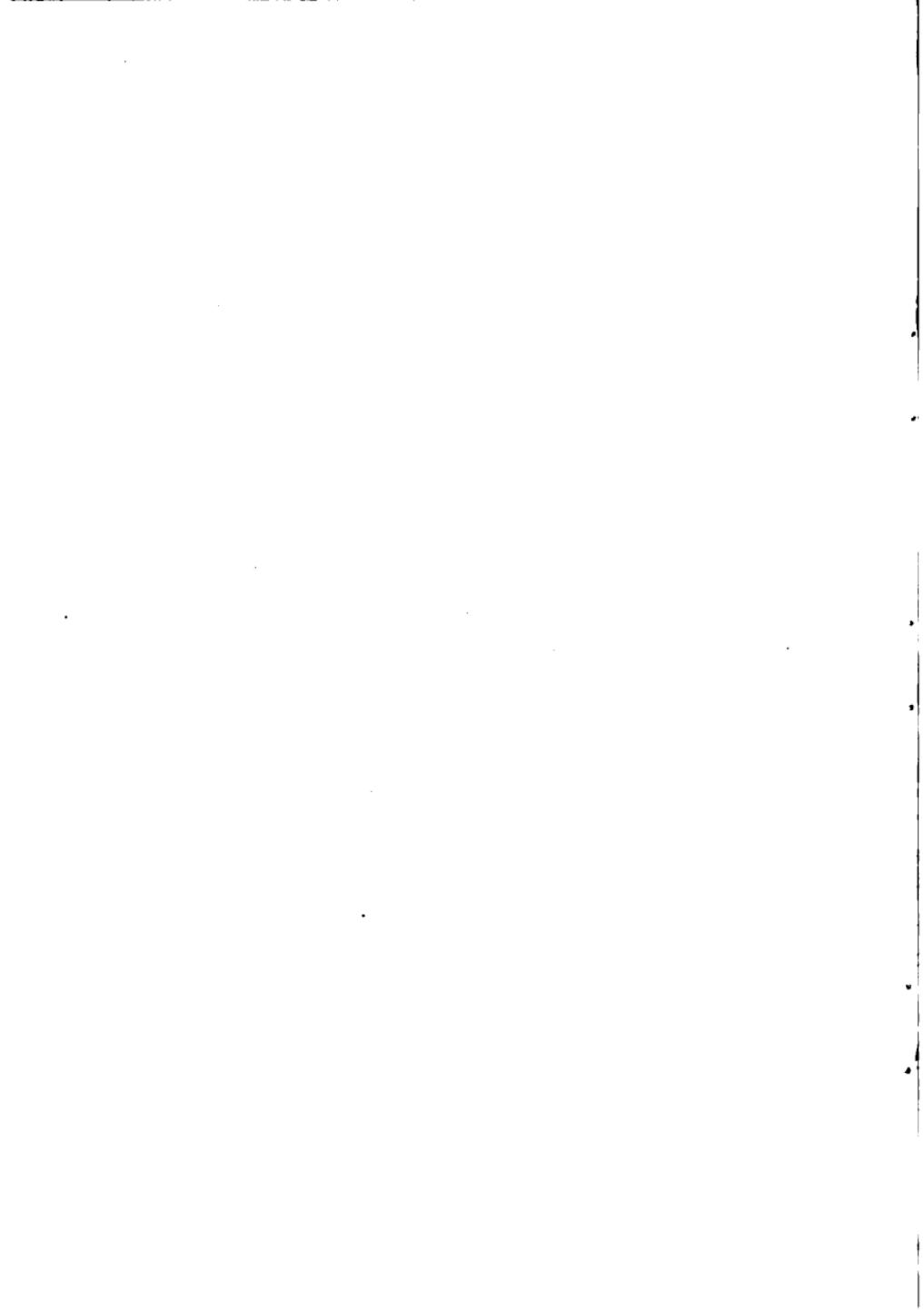
Dost thou say so?

Iago.

She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks,
She loved them most.

Oth.

And so she did.



Iago.

Why, go to, then;
 She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,
 To seal her father's eyes up close as oak,—
 He thought 'twas witchcraft :—but I am much to blame ;
 I humbly do beseech you of your pardon
 For too much loving you.

Oth.

I am bound to thee forever.

Iago.

I see this hath a little dashed your spirits.

Oth.

Not a jot, not a jot.

Iago.

Trust me, I fear it has.
 I hope you will consider what is spoke
 Comes from my love ;—but I do see you're moved :—
 I am to pray you not to strain my speech
 To grosser issues nor to larger reach
 Than to suspicion.

Oth.

I will not.

Iago.

Should you do so, my lord,
 My speech should fall into such vile success
 As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend :—
 My lord, I see you're moved.

Oth.

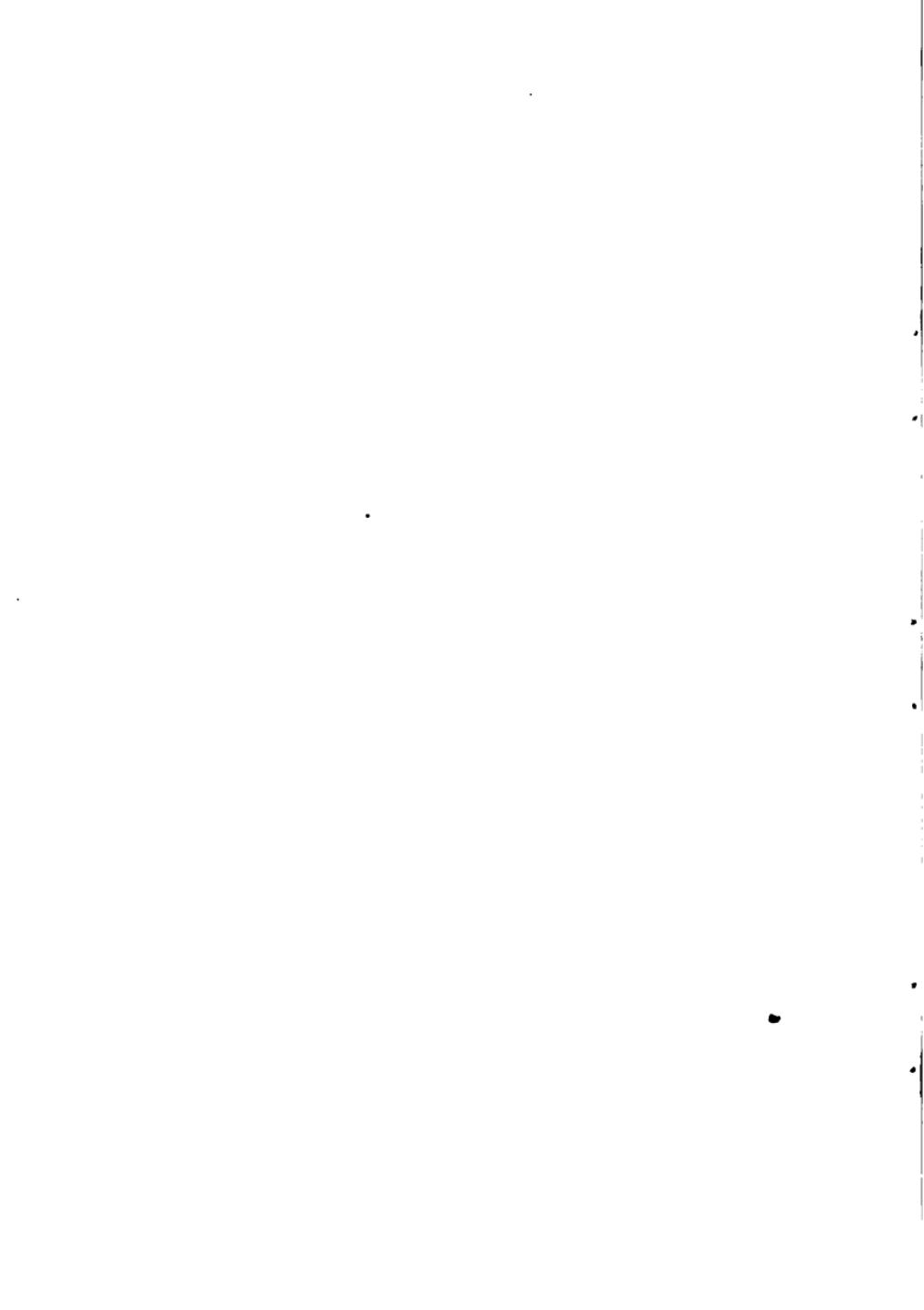
No, not much moved :—
 I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

Iago.

Long live she so ! and long live you to think so !

Oth.

And yet, how nature erring from itself —



Iago.

Ay, there's the point :— as,— to be bold with you,—
 Not to affect many propos'd matches
 Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,—
 Whereto we see in all things nature tends,—
 Foh! one may smell in such a will most rank,
 Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural :—
 But pardon me: I do not in position
 Distinctly speak of her: though I may fear
 Her will recoiling to her better judgment,
 May fall to match you with her country forms,
 And happily repent.

Oth.

Farewell, farewell :
 If more thou dost perceive, let me know more ;
 Set on thy wife to observe : leave me, Iago.

[*Falls on seat.*

Iago.

My lord, I take my leave.

[*Exit Iago L.*

Oth.

Why did I marry ?— This honest creature doubtless
 Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

[*Re-enter Iago L.*

Iago.

My lord, I would I might entreat your honour
 To scan this thing no further ; leave it to time :
 Although 't is fit that Cassio have his place,—
 For, sure, he fills it up with great ability,—
 Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,
 You shall by that perceive him and his means :
 Note, if your lady strain his entertainment
 With any strong or vehement importunity ;
 Much will be seen in that. In the meantime,
 Let me be thought too busy in my fears,—
 As worthy cause I have to fear I am,—
 And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.

Oth.

Fear not my government.

Iago.

I once more take my leave.

[*Exit L. I. E.*]

Oth.

This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learnèd spirit,
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black,
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have ; or, for I am declined
Into the vale of years,— yet that's not much ;—
She's gone ; I am abused ; and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O, curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites ! I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses. Desdemona comes :
If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself !—
I'll not believe it.

[*Re-enter Desdemona and Emilia from the Castle.*

Emilia retires a little way, during the ensuing dialogue, and then advances—when Othello and Desdemona go out.

Des.

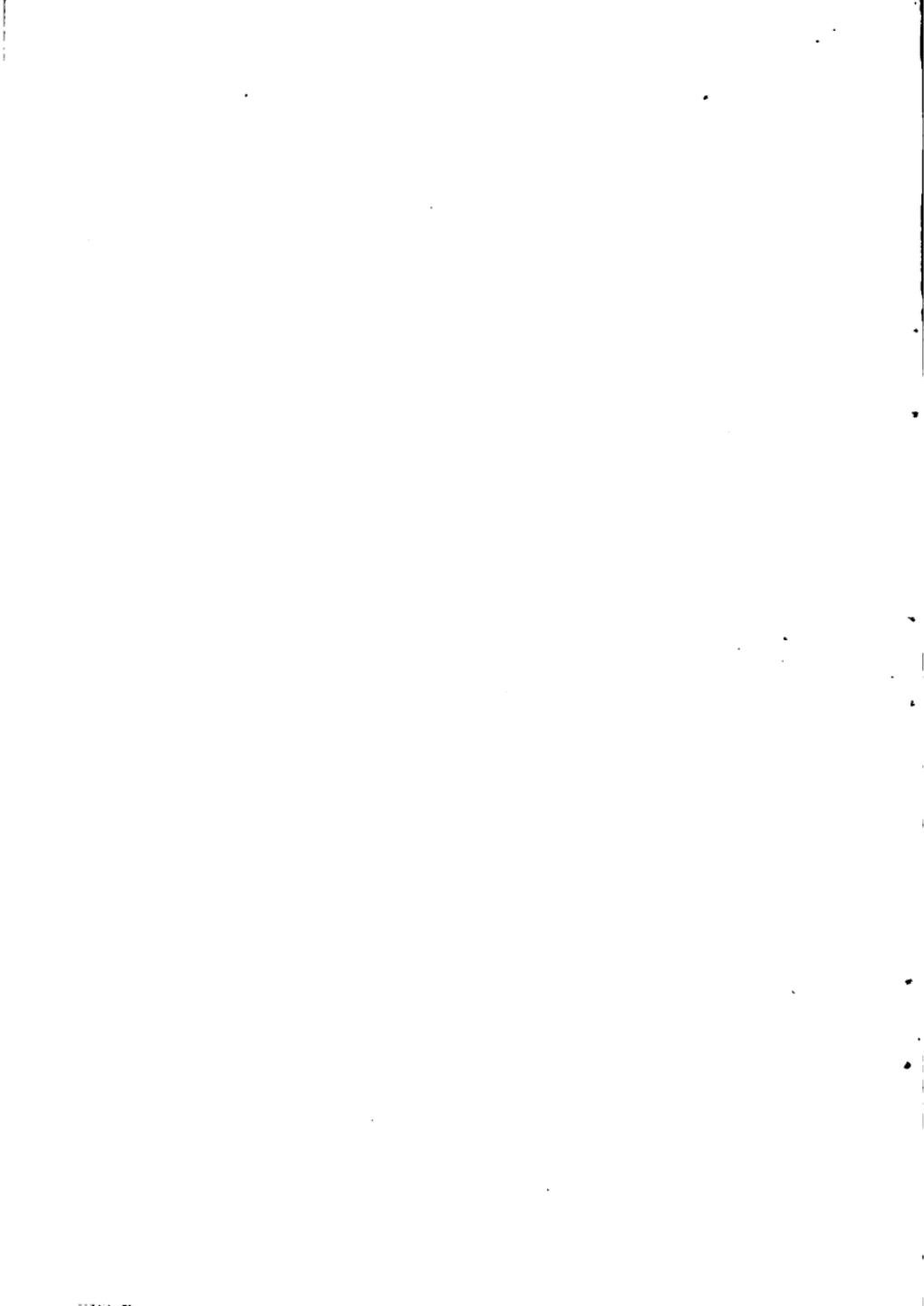
How now, my dear Othello !
Your dinner, and the generous islanders
By you invited, do attend your presence.

Oth.

I am to blame.

Des.

Why is your speech so faint ?
Are you not well ?



Oth.

I have a pain upon my forehead here.

Des.

Faith, that's with watching ; 't will away again :
Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
It will be well.

Oth.

Your napkin is too little ;
Let it alone.

[*He puts the handkerchiefs from him and she drops it.*
Come, I'll go in with you.

Des.

I am very sorry that you are not well.

[*Exeunt Othello and Desdemona, into Castle.—*
Emilia by chance sees the handkerchief and picks it up.

Emil.

I am glad I have found this napkin :
This was her first remembrance from the Moor :
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Wooed me to steal it ; but she so loves the token,—
For he conjured her she should ever keep it,—
That she reserves it evermore about her
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,
And give 't Iago :
What he will do with it heaven knows, not I ;
I nothing, but to please his fantasy.

[*Re-enter Iago L.*

Iago.

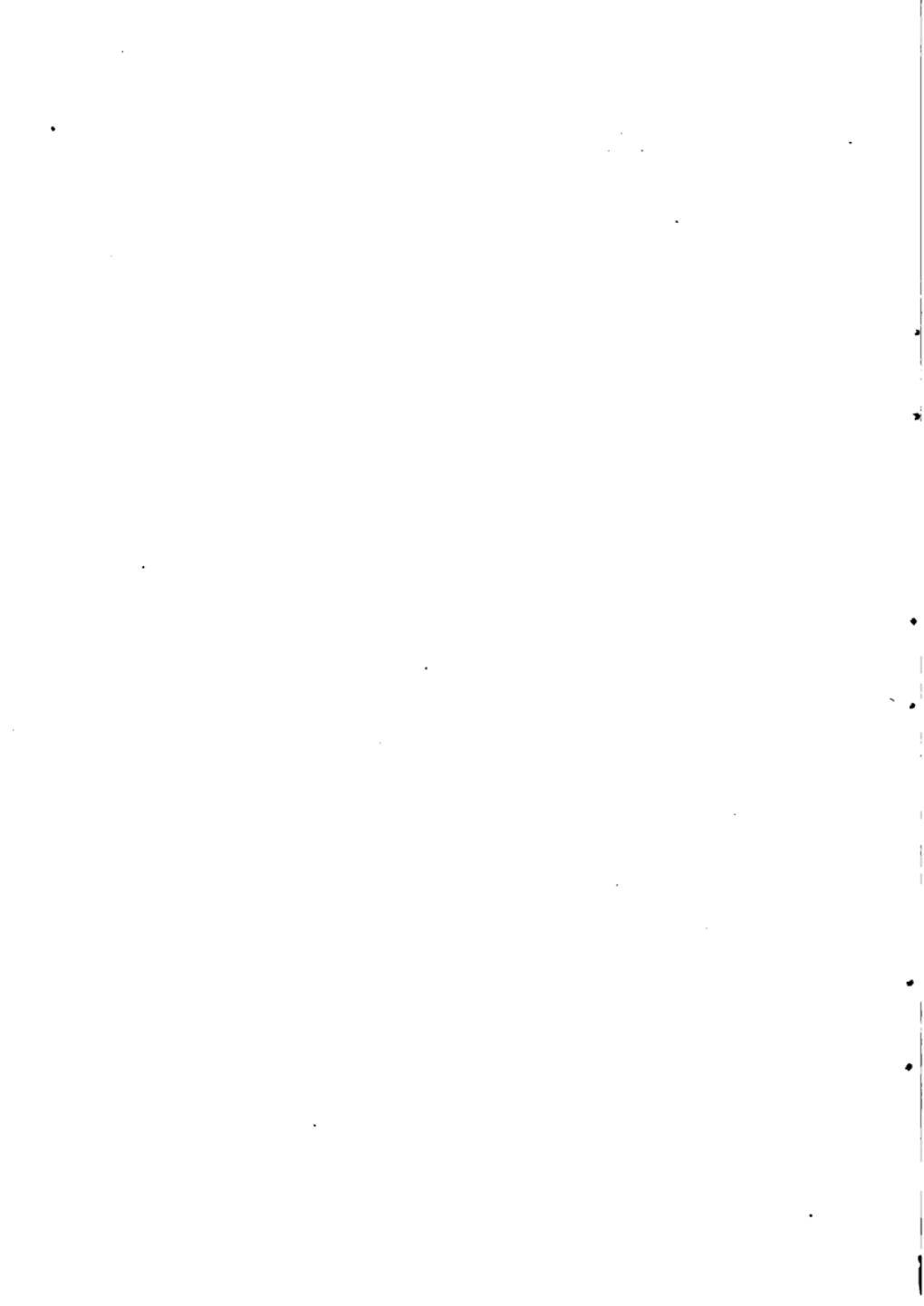
How now ! what do you here alone ?

Emil.

Do not you chide ; I have a thing for you.

Iago.

It is a common thing —



Emil.

Ha!

Iago.

To have a foolish wife.

*Emil.*O, is that all? What will you give me now
For that same handkerchief?*Iago.*

What handkerchief?

Emil.

What handkerchief!

Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;
That which so often you did bid me steal.*Iago.*

Hast stolen it from her?

*Emil.*No—but she let it drop by negligence,
And, to the advantage, I, being here, took't up.
Look, here it is.*Iago.*

A good wench; give it me.

*Emil.*What will you do with't, that you have been so earnest
To have me filch it?*Iago.*

[Snatching it.]

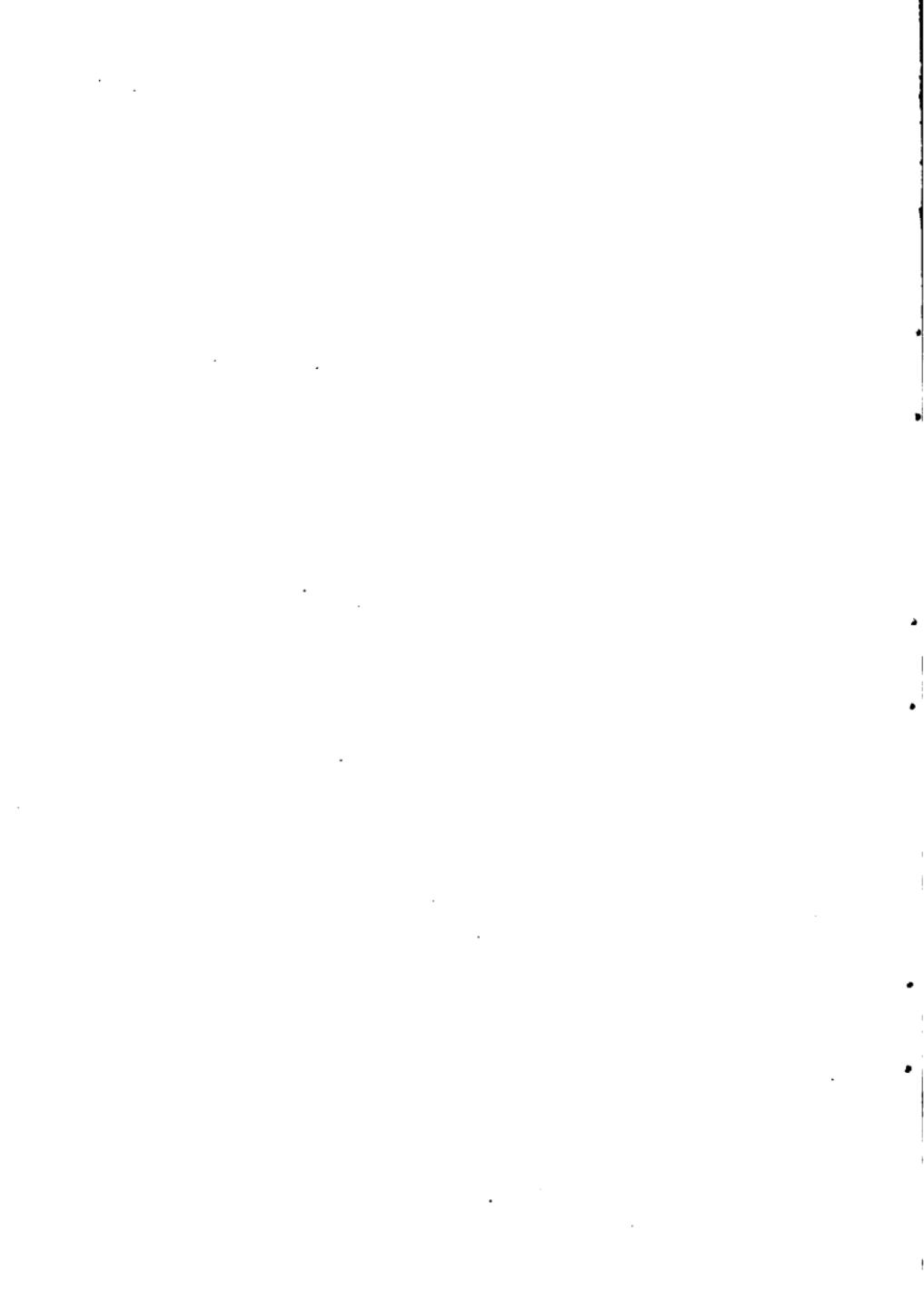
Why, what's that to you?

*Emil.*If it be not for some purpose of import,
Give't me again: poor lady! she'll run mad
When she shall lack it.*Iago.*

Be not acknown on't; I have use for it.

Go, leave me.

[Exit *Emilia* into Castle.]



I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
 And let him find it. Trifles light as air
 Are to the jealous confirmations strong
 As proofs of holy writ: this may do something.
 The Moor already changes with my poison:—
 Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
 Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
 But, with a little act upon the blood,
 Burn like the mines of sulphur.— I did say so:—
 Look, where he comes! Not poppy, nor mandragora,
 Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
 Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
 Which thou ow'dst yesterday.

[*Re-enter Othello.*

Oth.

Ha! ha! false to me?

Iago.

Why, how now, general! no more of that.

Oth.

Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack:—
 I swear 't is better to be much abused
 Than but to know 't a little.

Iago.

How now, my lord!

Oth.

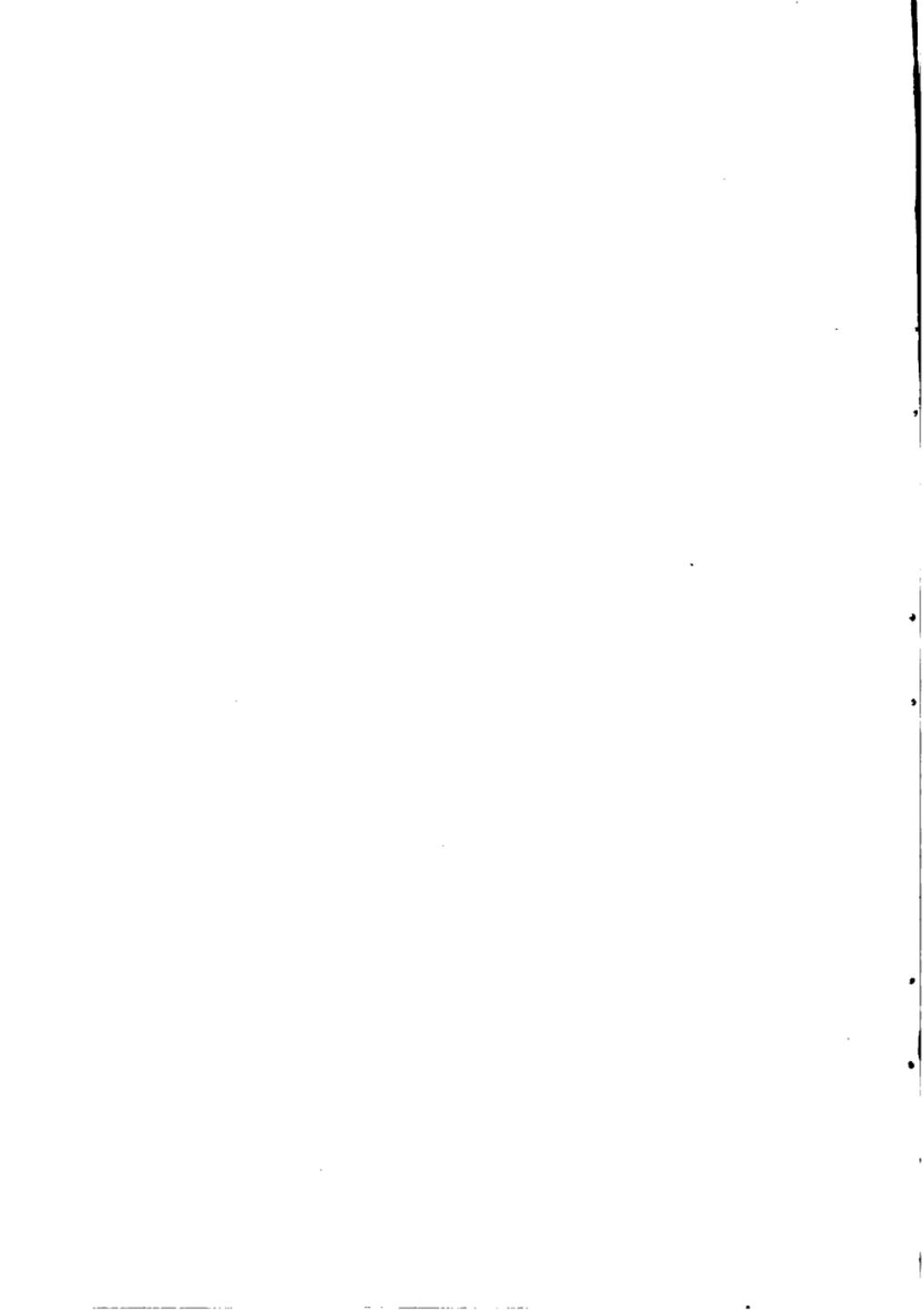
What sense had I of her stolen hours?
 I saw 't not, thought it not, it harmed not me:
 He that is robbed, not wanting what is stolen,
 Let him not know 't, and he's not robbed at all.

Iago.

I am sorry to hear this.

Oth.

O, now, for ever
 Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
 Farewell the plumèd troop, and the big wars,
 That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!



Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
 The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
 The royal banner, and all quality,
 Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war !
 And O, you mortal engines, whose rude throats
 The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
 Farewell ! Othello's occupation's gone !

[*Falls on seat. Iago kneels to him.*

Iago.

Is 't possible, my lord ?

Oth.

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a bawd,—
 Be sure of it ; give me the ocular proof ;

[*Seizing him by the throat.*

Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,
 Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
 Than answer my waked wrath.

Iago.

Is 't come to this ?

Oth.

Make me to see 't, or, at the least, so prove it,
 That the probation bear no hinge nor loop
 To hang a doubt on ; or woe upon thy life.

Iago.

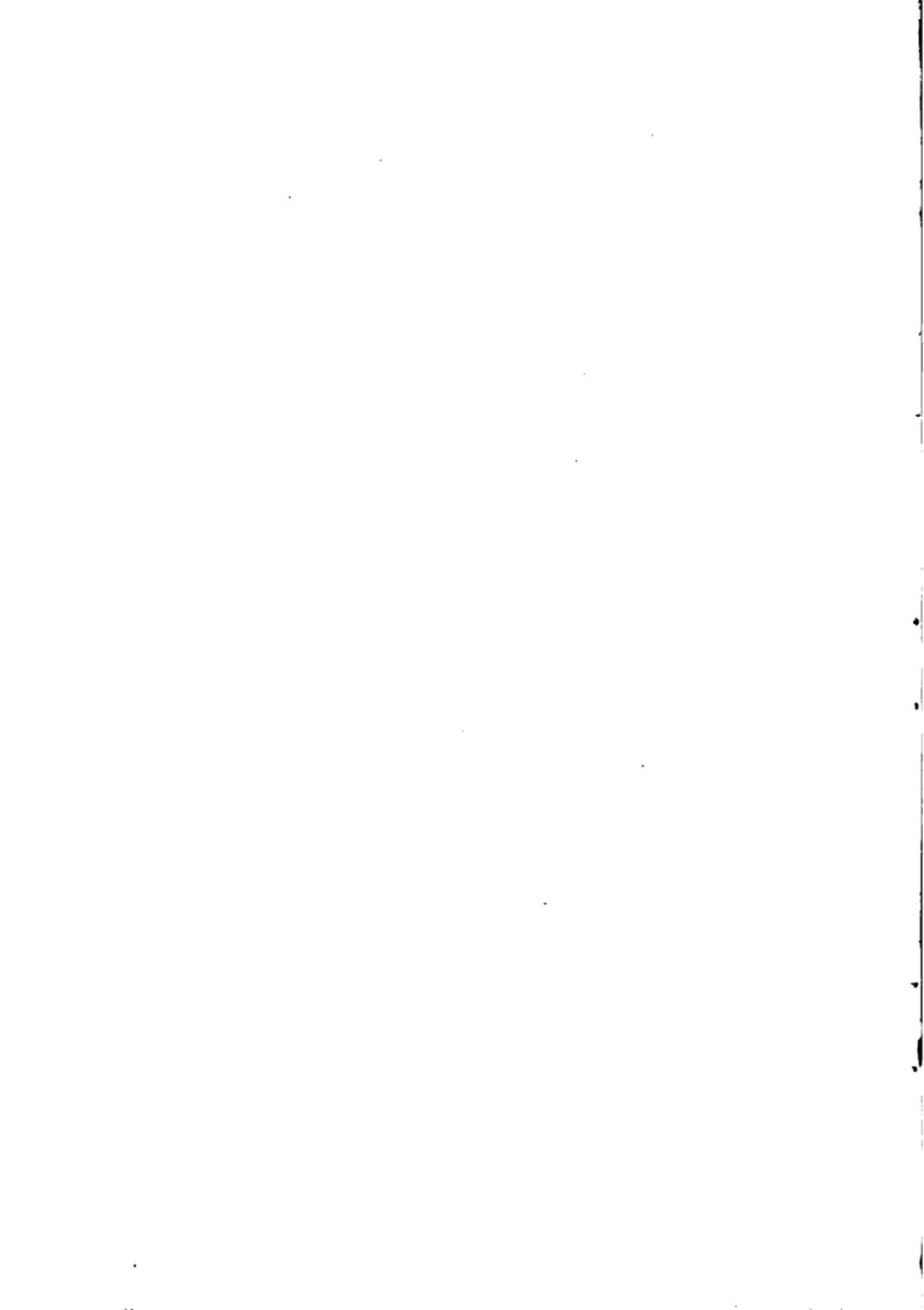
My noble lord —

Oth.

If thou dost slander her, and torture me,
 Never pray more ; abandon all remorse ;
 On horror's head horrors accumulate ;
 Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed ;
 For nothing canst thou to damnation add
 Greater than that.

Iago.

O, grace, O, heaven, defend me !
 Are you a man ? have you a soul or sense ?



God be wi' you; take mine office.—O, wretched fool,
 That liv'st to make thine honesty a vice!—
 O, monstrous world! Take note, take note, O! world,
 To be direct and honest is not safe.—
 I thank you for this profit; and from hence
 I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.

Oth.

Nay, stay;—thou shouldst be honest.

Iago.

I should be wise; for honesty's a fool,
 And loses that it works for.

Oth.

By the world,
 I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
 I think that thou art just, and think thou art not:
 I'll have some proof: her name, that was as fresh
 As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
 As mine own face.—If there be cords, or knives,
 Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
 I'll not endure it.—Would I were satisfied!

Iago.

I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:
 I do repent me that I put it to you.
 You would be satisfied?

Oth.

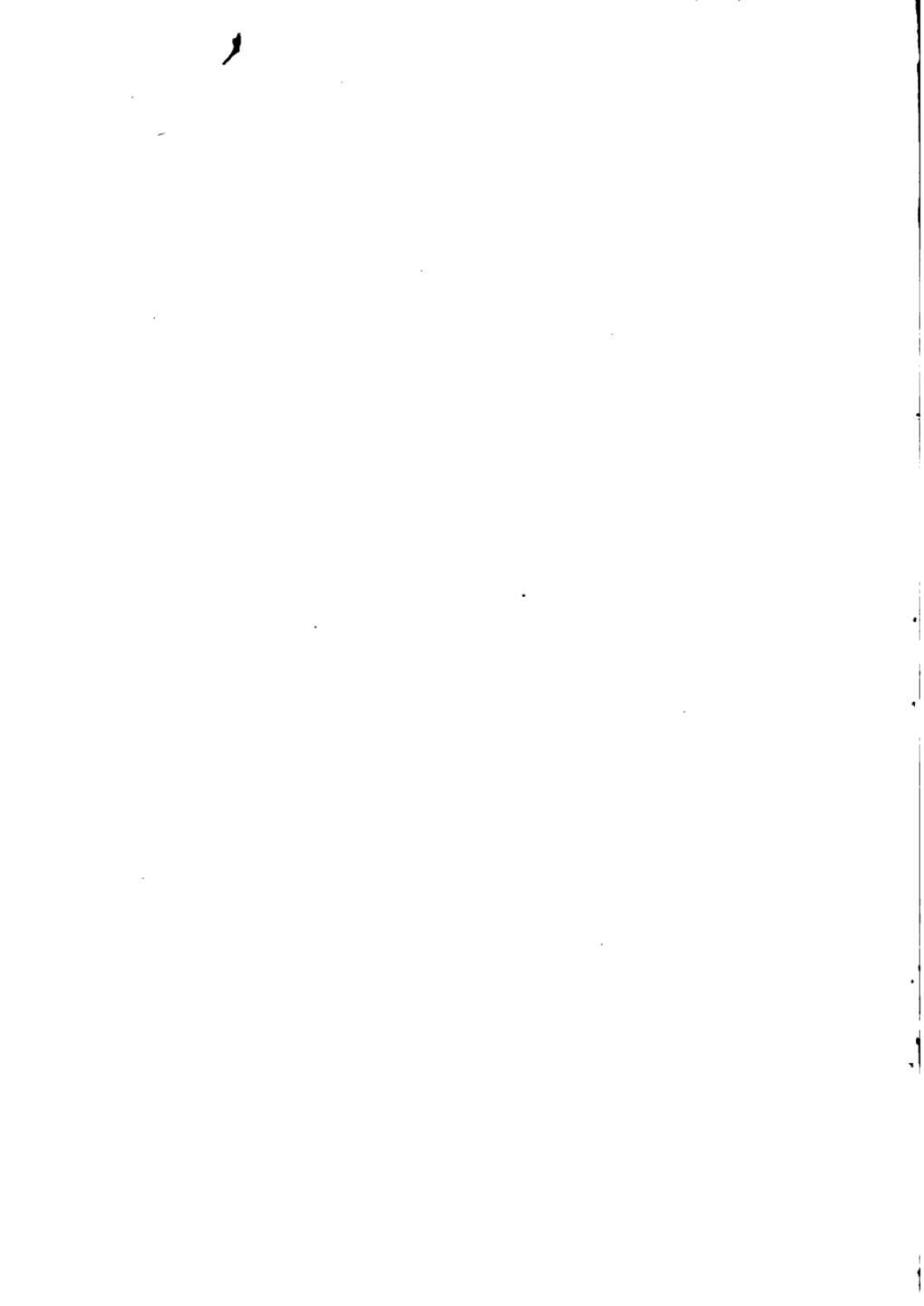
Would! nay, I will.

Iago.

And may: but, how?
 If imputation and strong circumstances,—
 Which lead directly to the door of truth,—
 Will give you satisfaction, you may have't.

Oth.

Give me a living reason she's disloyal.



Iago.

I do not like the office :
 But, sith I am entered in this cause so far,—
 Pricked to 't by foolish honesty and love,—
 I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately ;
 And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
 I could not sleep.
 There are a kind of men so loose of soul
 That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs :
 One of this kind is Cassio :
 In sleep I heard him say, "Sweet Desdemona,
 Let us be wary, let us hide our loves ;"
 And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
 Cry, "O, sweet creature!"—and then,
 "Cursèd fate that gave thee to the Moor!"

Oth.

O, monstrous ! monstrous !

Iago.

Nay, this was but his dream.

Oth.

But this denoted a foregone conclusion.

Iago.

'T is a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream ;
 And this may help to thicken other proofs
 That do demonstrate thinly.

Oth.

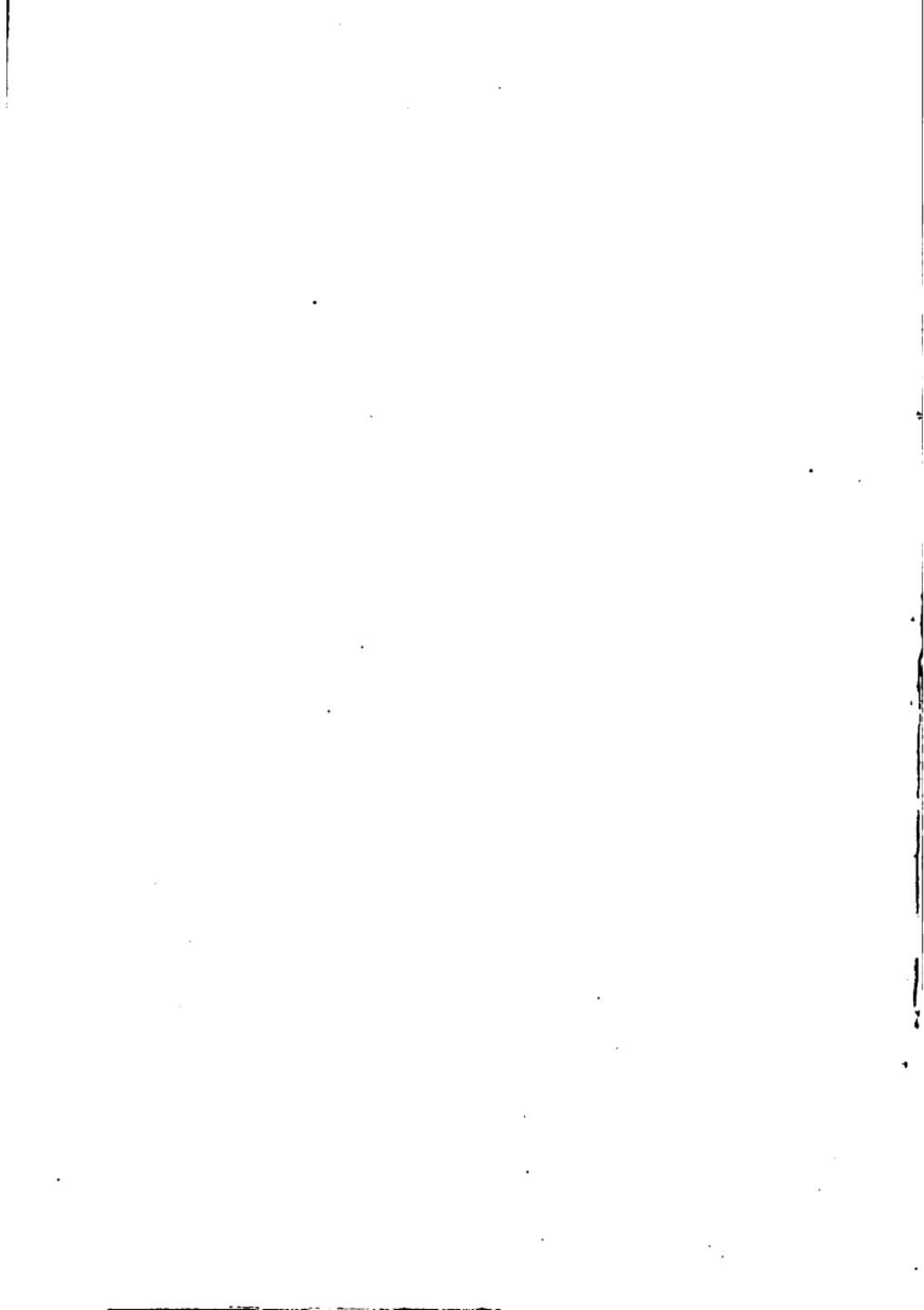
I 'll tear her all to pieces.

Iago.

Nay, but be wise : yet we see nothing done ;
 She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,—
 Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief,
 Spotted with strawberries, in your wife's hand ?

Oth.

I gave her such a one : 't was my first gift.



Iago.

I know not that; but such a handkerchief
(I am sure it was your wife's) did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

Oth.

If it be that —

Iago.

If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her with the other proofs.

Oth.

O, that the slave had forty thousand lives,—
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge!
Now do I see 't is true.—Look here, Iago!
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven;
'T is gone.—
Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell!
Yield up, O! love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 't is of aspics' tongues!

Iago.

Pray, be content.

Oth.

O, blood, Iago, blood!

Iago.

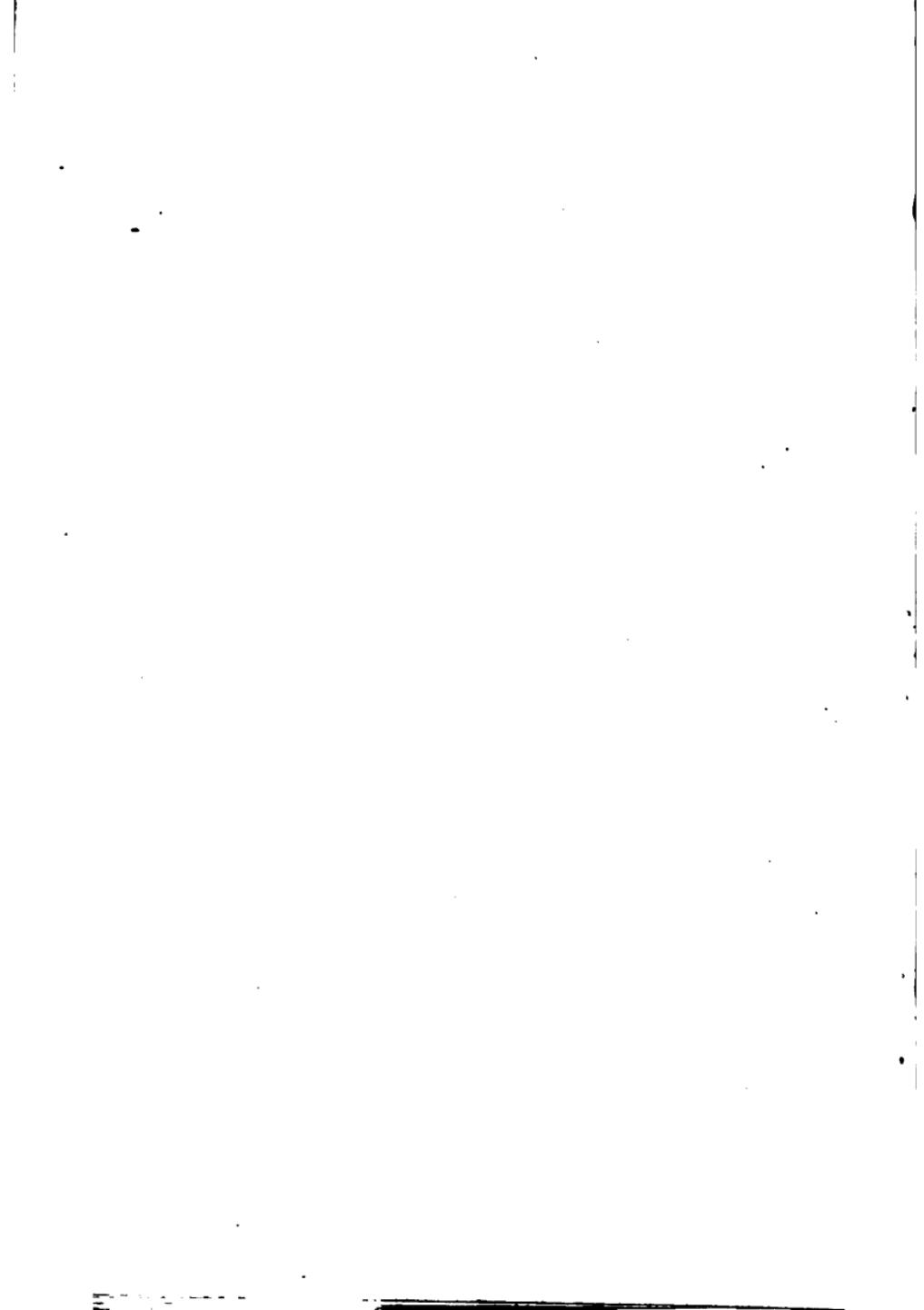
Patience, I say; your mind may change.

Oth.

Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont;
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up.—

Now, by yond' marble heaven,

[Kneels.



In the due reverence of a sacred vow
I here engage my words.

Iago.

[*Kneels.*

Do not rise yet.—

Witness, you ever-burning lights above,
You elements that clip us round about,—
Witness that here Iago doth give up
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
To wronged Othello's service! Let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody work soever.

Oth.

I greet thy love, [*Rises.*
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,
And will upon the instant put thee to 't:
Within these three days let me hear thee say
That Cassio 's not alive.

Iago.

[*Rises.*

My friend is dead ; 't is done at your request.
But let her live.

Oth.

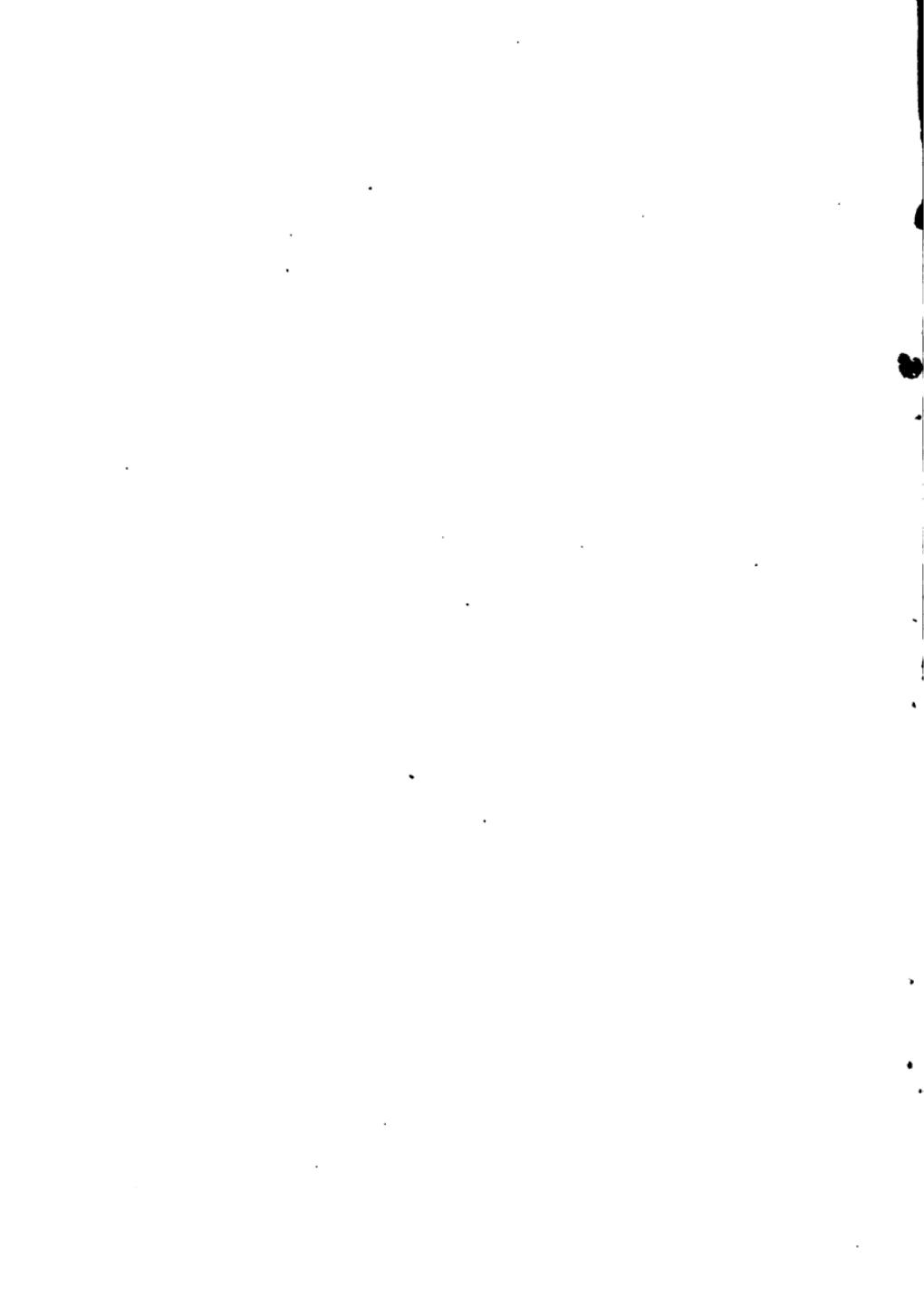
Damn her!—lewd minx! damn her! damn her!
Come, go with me apart ; I will withdraw,
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

Iago.

I am your own for ever.

CURTAIN.





Act Fourth.

Scene First.—THE SAME AS IN ACTS SECOND AND THIRD.

[Enter Desdemona and Emilia.

Des.

Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia ?

Emil.

I know not, madam.

Des.

Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse
Full of cruzadoes : and, but my noble Moor
Is true of mind, and made of no such baseness
As jealous creatures are, it were enough
To put him to ill thinking.

Emil.

Is he not jealous ?

Des.

Who, he ? I think the sun where he was born
Drew all such humours from him.

Emil.

Look, where he comes.

Des.

I will not leave him now till Cassio
Be called to him.

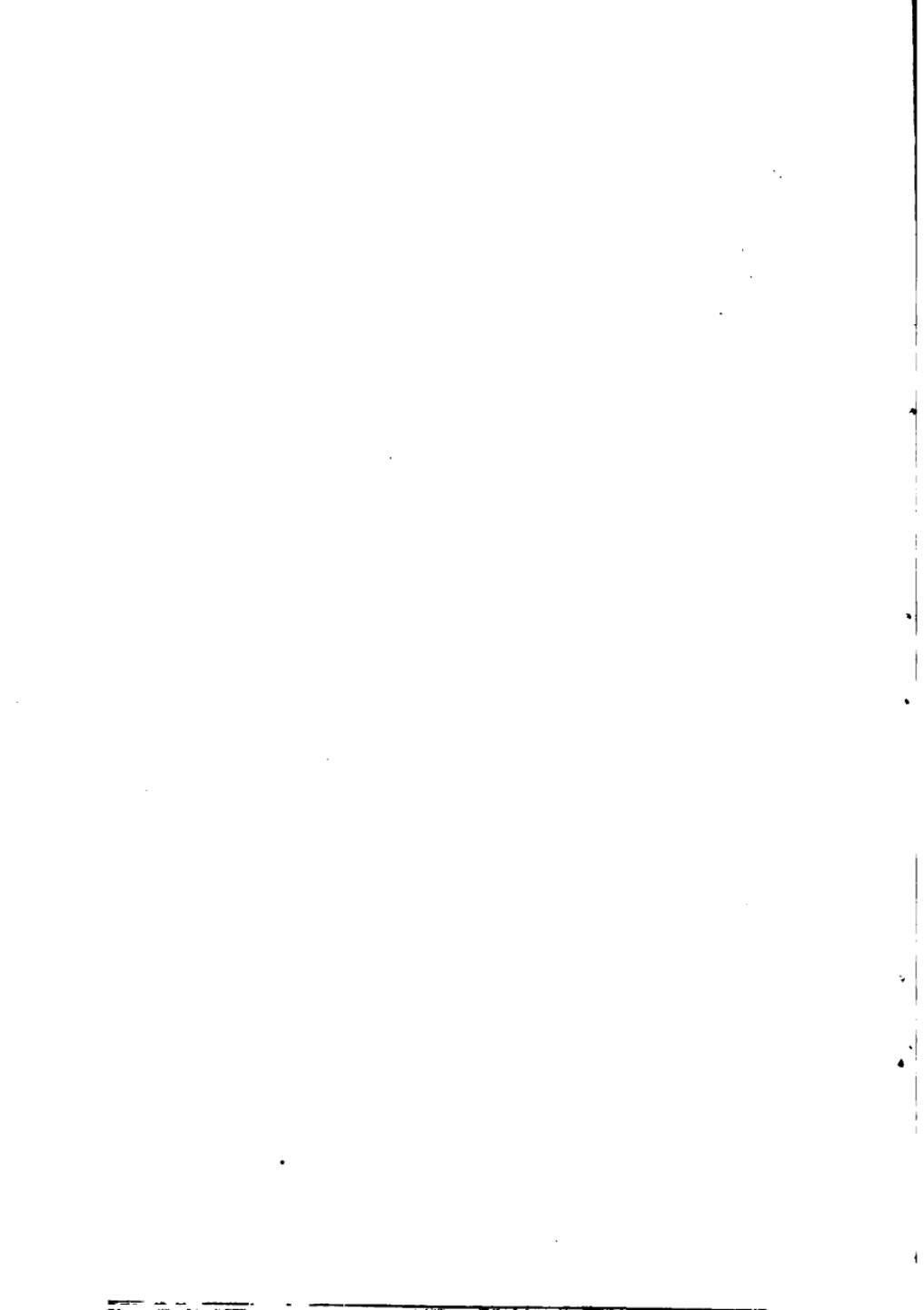
[Enter Othello.—Exit Emilia.

How is 't with you, my lord ?

Oth.

Well, my good lady.—
O, hardness to dissemble !—
How do you, Desdemona ?

[Aside.



Des.

Well, my good lord.

Oth.

Give me your hand: this hand is moist, my lady

Des.

It yet has felt no age nor known no sorrow.

Oth.

This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:—
 Hot, hot, and moist: this hand of yours requires
 A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
 Much castigation, exercise devout.
 'T is a good hand, a frank one.

Des.

You may, indeed, say so;
 For 't was that hand that gave away my heart.

Oth.

A liberal hand; the hearts of old gave hands.
 But our new heraldry is—hands, not hearts.

Des.

I cannot speak of this. Come, now, your promise.

Oth.

What promise, chuck?

Des.

I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

Oth.

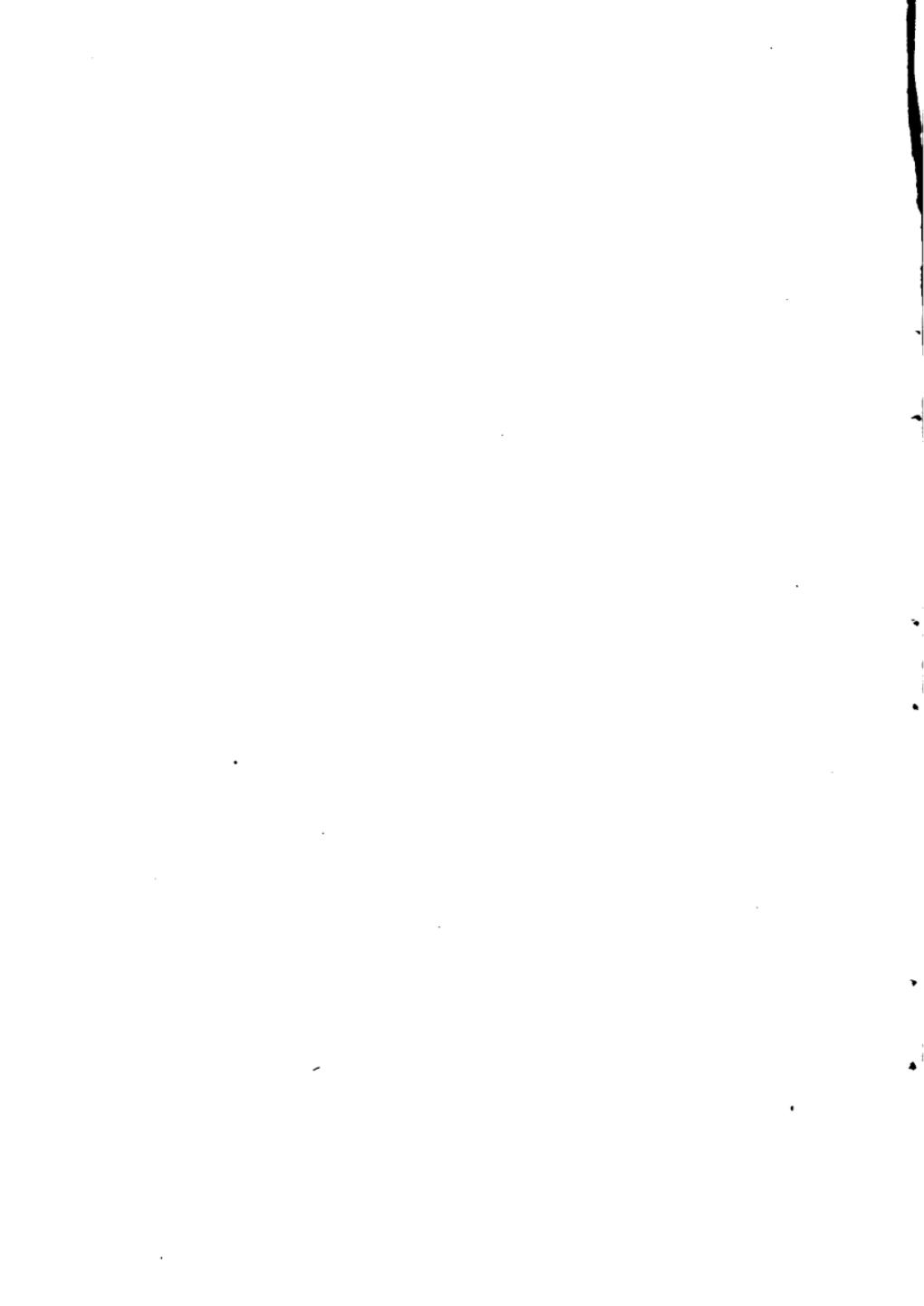
I have a salt and sullen rheum offends me;
 Lend me thy handkerchief.

Des.

Here, my lord.

Oth.

That which I gave you.



Des.

I have it not about me.

Oth.

Not ?

Des.

No, indeed, my lord.

Oth.

That is a fault.

That handkerchief

Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
 She was a charmer, and could almost read
 The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it,
 'T would make her amiable, and subdue my father
 Entirely to her love; but if she lost it,
 Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
 Should hold her loathèd, and his spirits should hunt
 After new fancies: she, dying, gave it me;
 And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
 To give it her. I did so: and take heed on 't;
 Make it a darling like your precious eye;
 To lose or give 't away were such perdition
 As nothing else could match.

Des.

Is 't possible ?

Oth.

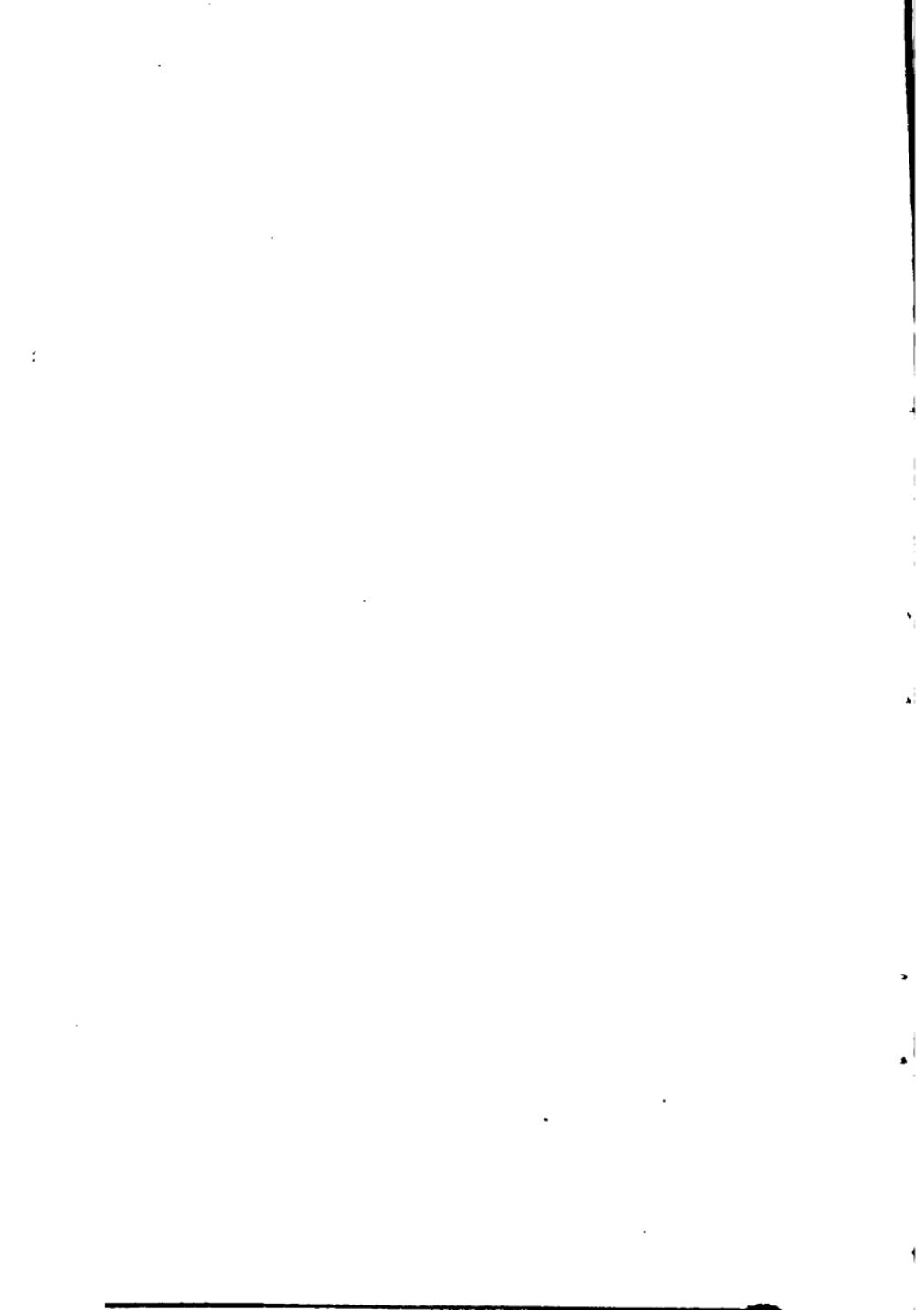
'T is true: there 's magic in the web of it:
 A sibyl, that had numbered in the world
 The sun to course two hundred compasses,
 In her prophetic fury sewed the work;
 The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk;
 And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful
 Conserved of maidens' hearts.

Des.

Indeed! is 't true ?

Oth.

Most veritable; therefore look to 't well.



Des.

Then would to heaven that I had never seen it!

Oth.

Ha! wherefore?

Des.

Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

Oth.

Is 't lost? is 't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?

Des.

Heaven bless us!

Oth.

Say you?

Des.

It is not lost; but what an if it were?

Oth.

How!

Des.

I say, it is not lost.

Oth.

Fetch 't, let me see 't.

Des.

Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.
This is a trick to put me from my suit:
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

Oth.

Fetch me the handkerchief:

My mind misgives.

[*Aside.*]

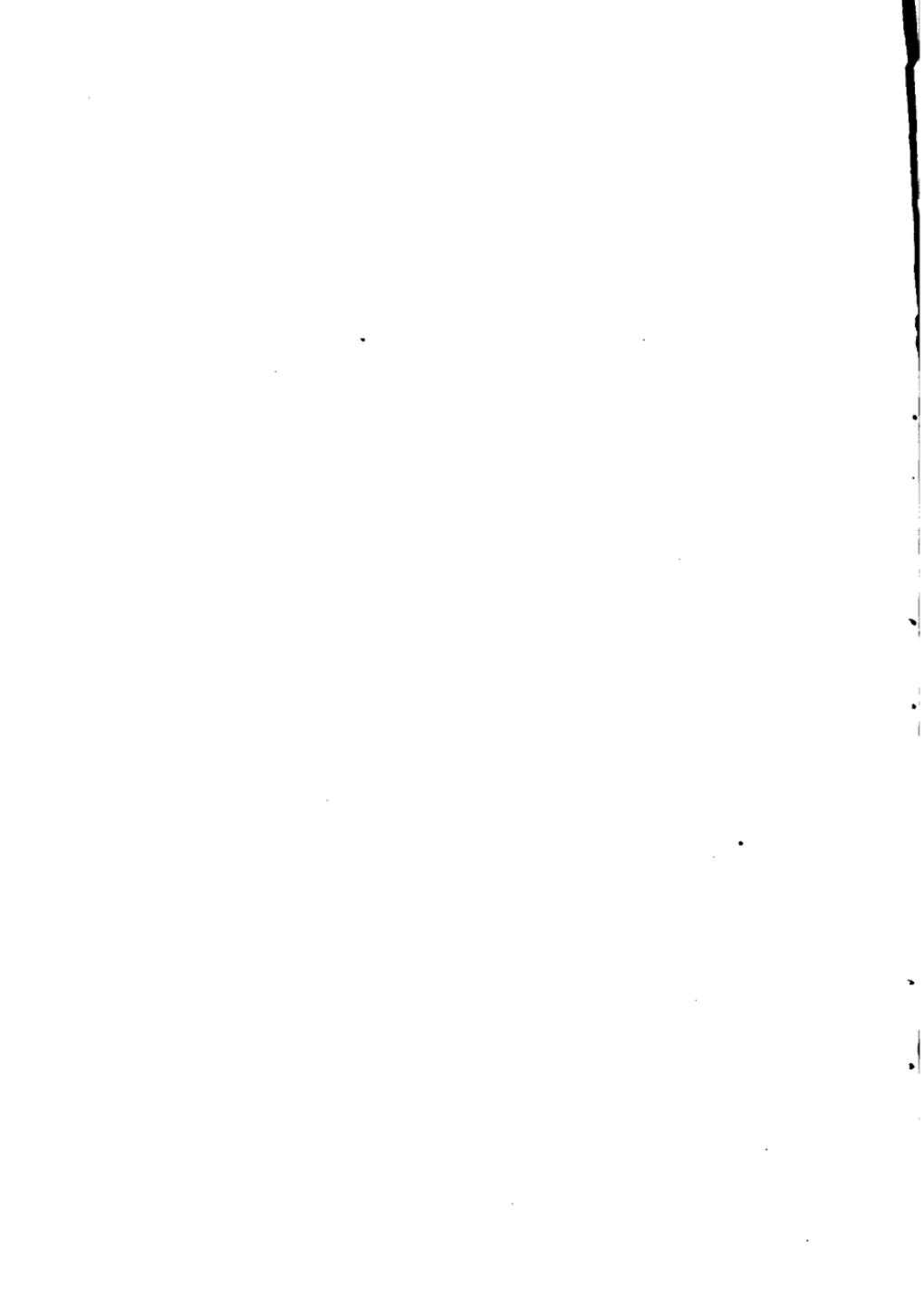
Des.

Come, come;

You 'll never meet a more sufficient man.

Oth.

The handkerchief!



Des.

I pray, talk me of Cassio.

Oth.

The handkerchief!

*Des.*A man that all his time
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love;
Shared dangers with you —*Oth.*

The handkerchief!

Des.

In sooth, you are to blame.

Oth.

Away!

[Exit Othello L.— Re-enter Emilia.

Emil.

Is not this man jealous?

Des.

I ne'er saw this before.

Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief:
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

[Sits.

Emil.'T is not a year or two shows us a man:
Look you — Cassio and my husband!

[Enter Cassio and Iago, at back.

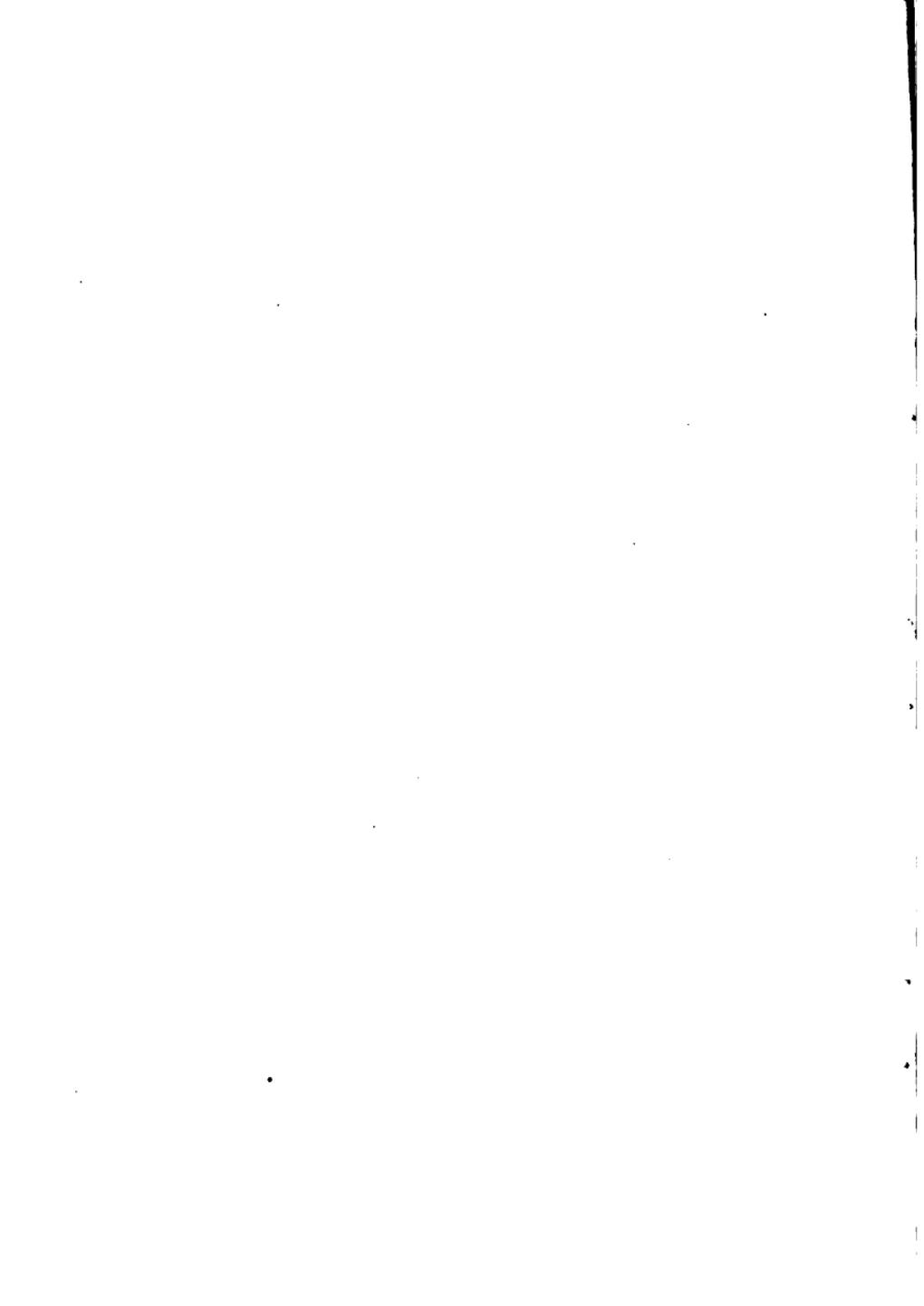
*Iago.*There is no other way; 't is she must do 't:
And, lo, the happiness! go, and imp̄tune her.*Des.*

How now, good Cassio! what's the news with you?

Cas.

Madam, my former suit.

[Advances R.



Des.

Alas ! thrice gentle Cassio !
 My advocation is not now in tune ;
 My lord is not my lord ; nor should I know him,
 Were he in favour, as in humour, altered.
 You must awhile be patient :
 What I can do I will ; and more I will
 Than for myself I dare : let that suffice you.

Iago.

Is my lord angry ?

Emil.

He went hence but now,
 And certainly in strange unquietness.

Iago.

Can he be angry ? I have seen the cannon,
 When it hath blown his ranks into the air,
 And, like the devil, from his very arm
 Puffed his own brother ;—and can he be angry ?
 Something of moment, then : I will go meet him.

Des.

I pr'ythee do so.

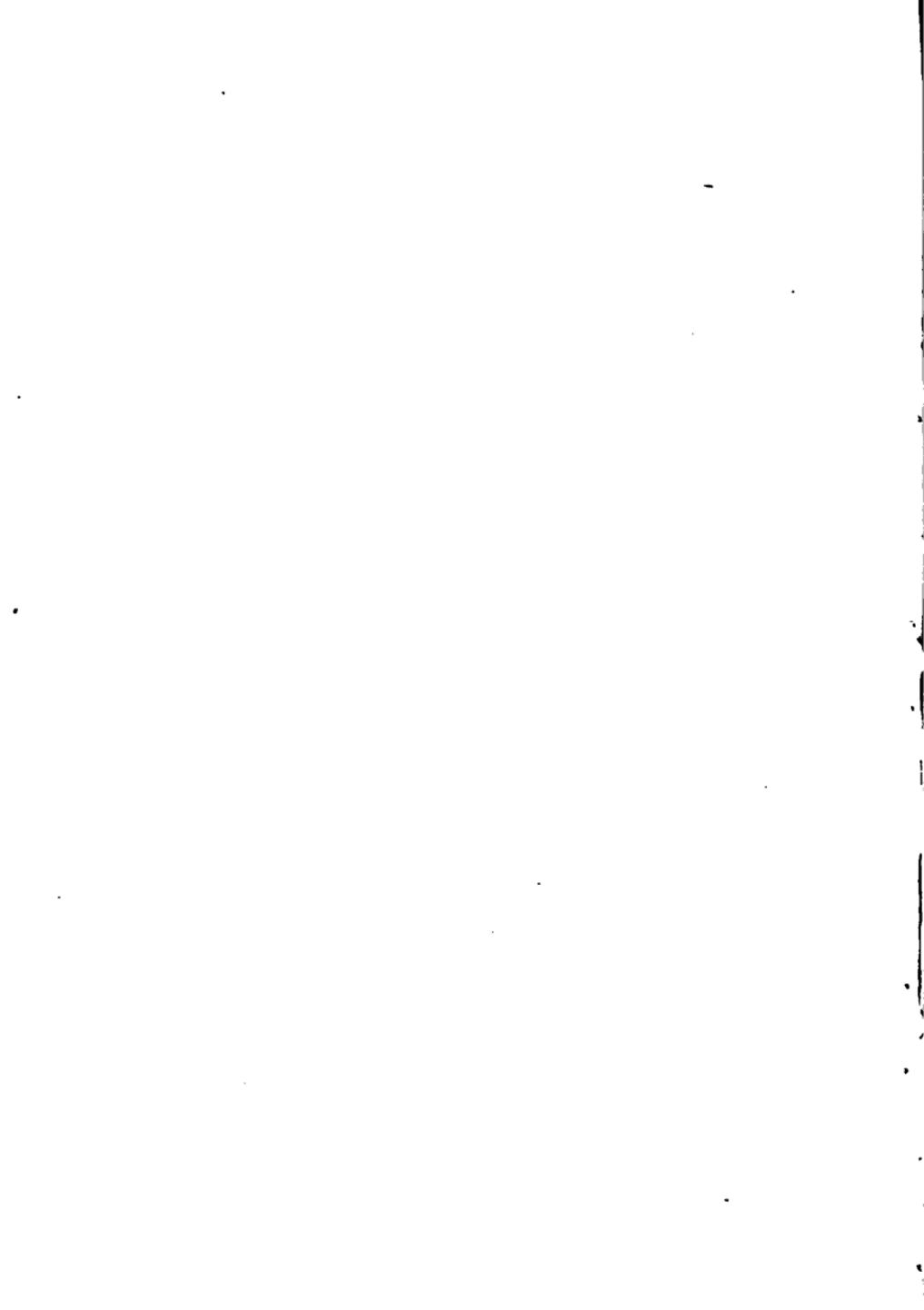
Iago.

There 's matter in 't indeed, if he be angry.

[*Exit Iago L.*

Des.

Something, sure, of state
 Hath puddled his clear spirit ; and in such cases
 Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
 Though great ones are their object.
 Nay, we must think men are not gods,
 Nor of them look for such observances
 As fit the bridal.
 I will go seek him.—Cassio, walk hereabout—
 If I do find him fit, I 'll move your suit,
 And seek to effect it to my uttermost.



Cas.

I humbly thank your ladyship.

[*Exit Cassio R.**Emil.*

Pray Heaven it be state matters, as you think,
 And no conception nor no jealous toy
 Concerning you.

Des.

Alas! the day, I never gave him cause!

Emil.

But jealous souls will not be answered so ;
 They are not ever jealous for the cause,
 But jealous for they are jealous : 't is a monster
 Begot upon itself, born on itself.

*Des.*Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind ! [*Kneels.**Emil.*

Lady, Amen !

[*Scene changes.***Scene Second.—A ROOM IN THE CASTLE.**[*Enter Othello and Emilia.**Oth.*

You have seen nothing, then ?

Emil.

Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

Oth.

Yes, you have seen Cassio and her together.

Emil.

But then I saw no harm, and then I heard
Each syllable that breath made up between them.

Oth.

What ! did they never whisper ?

Emil.

Never, my lord.

Oth.

Nor send you out o' the way ?

Emil.

Never.

Oth.

To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing ?

Emil.

Never, my lord.

Oth.

That 's strange.

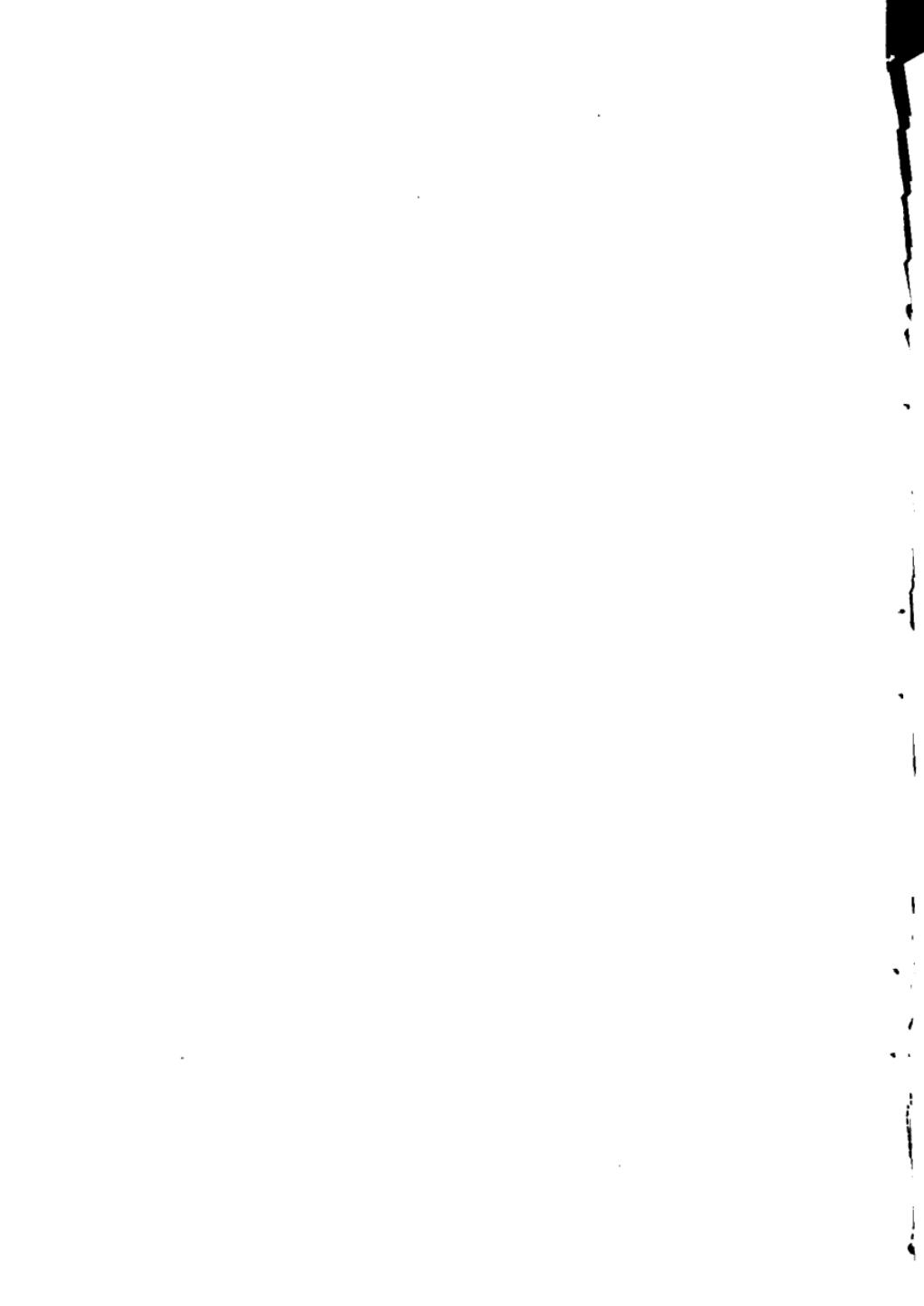
Emil.

I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake : if you think other,
Remove your thought,—it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch have put this in your head,
Let Heaven requite it with the serpent's curse !
For, if she be not honest, chaste and true,
There 's no man happy ; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander.

Oth.

Bid her come hither :—go. [Exit *Emilia* R.
She says enough ;— yet she 's a simple one
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle jade,
A closet lock and key of villainous secrets ;
And yet she 'll kneel and pray ; I have seen her do 't.

[Enter *Desdemona* and *Emilia* R.



Des.

My lord, what is your will ?

Oth.

Pray, chuck, come hither.

Des.

What is your pleasure ?

*Oth.*Let me see your eyes ;
Look in my face.*Des.*

What horrible fancy 's this ?

Oth.[*To Emilia.*Some of your function, mistress ; shut the door ;
Cough, or cry hem, if anybody come :
Your mystery, your mystery ;— nay, despatch.[*Exit Emilia R.**Des.*Upon my knees, what doth your speech import ?
I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words.*Oth.*

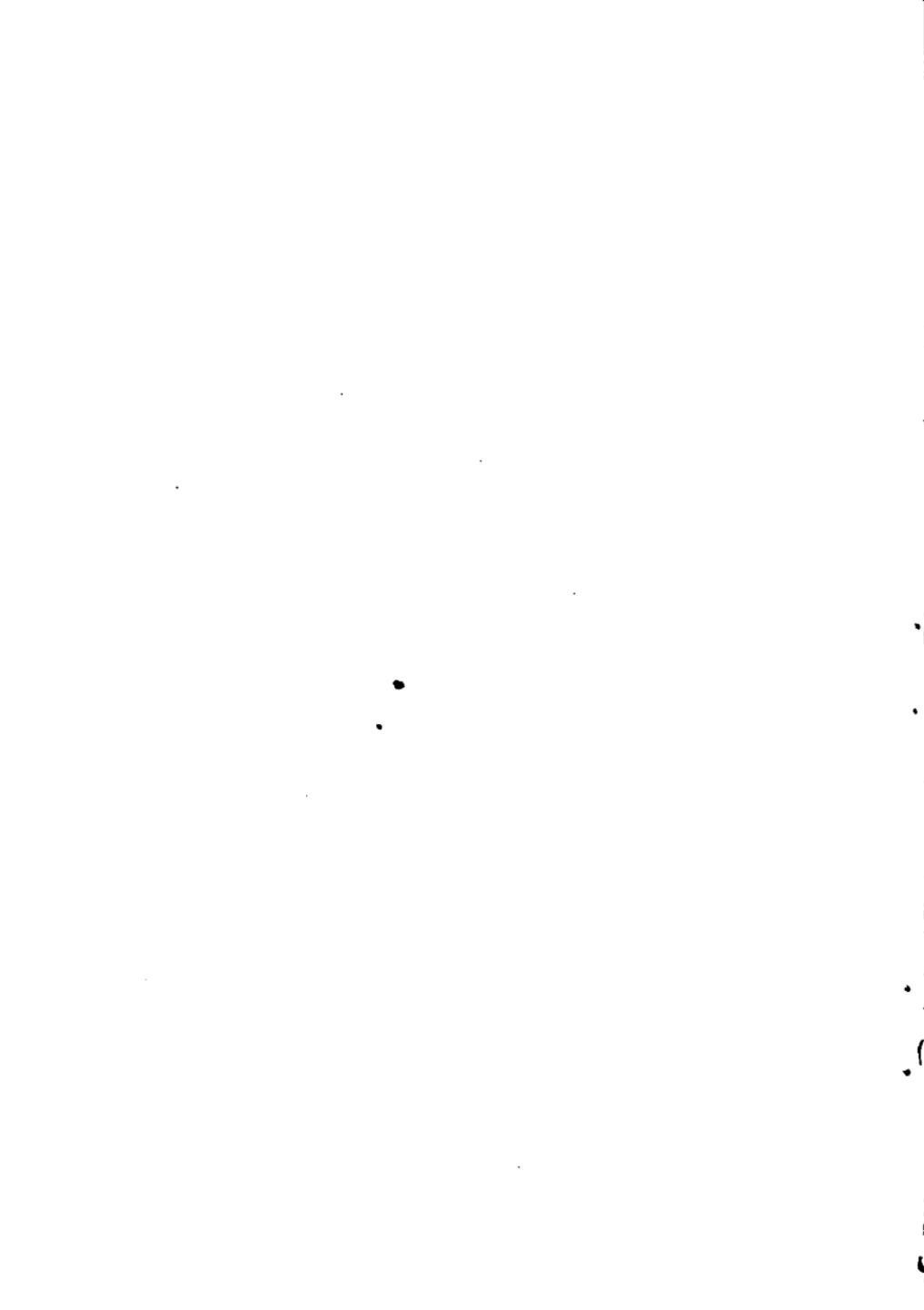
Why, what art thou ?

*Des.*Your wife, my lord; your true
And loyal wife.*Oth.*Come, swear it, damn thyself ;
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee : swear thou art honest.*Des.*

Heaven doth truly know it.

Oth.

Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.



Des.

To whom, my lord ? with whom ? how am I false ?

Oth.

O, Desdemona! — away ! away ! away !

Des.

Alas, the heavy day ! — Why do you weep ?
 Am I the occasion of these tears, my lord ?
 If haply you my father do suspect
 An instrument of this your calling back,
 Lay not your blame on me : if you have lost him,
 Why, I have lost him, too.

Oth.

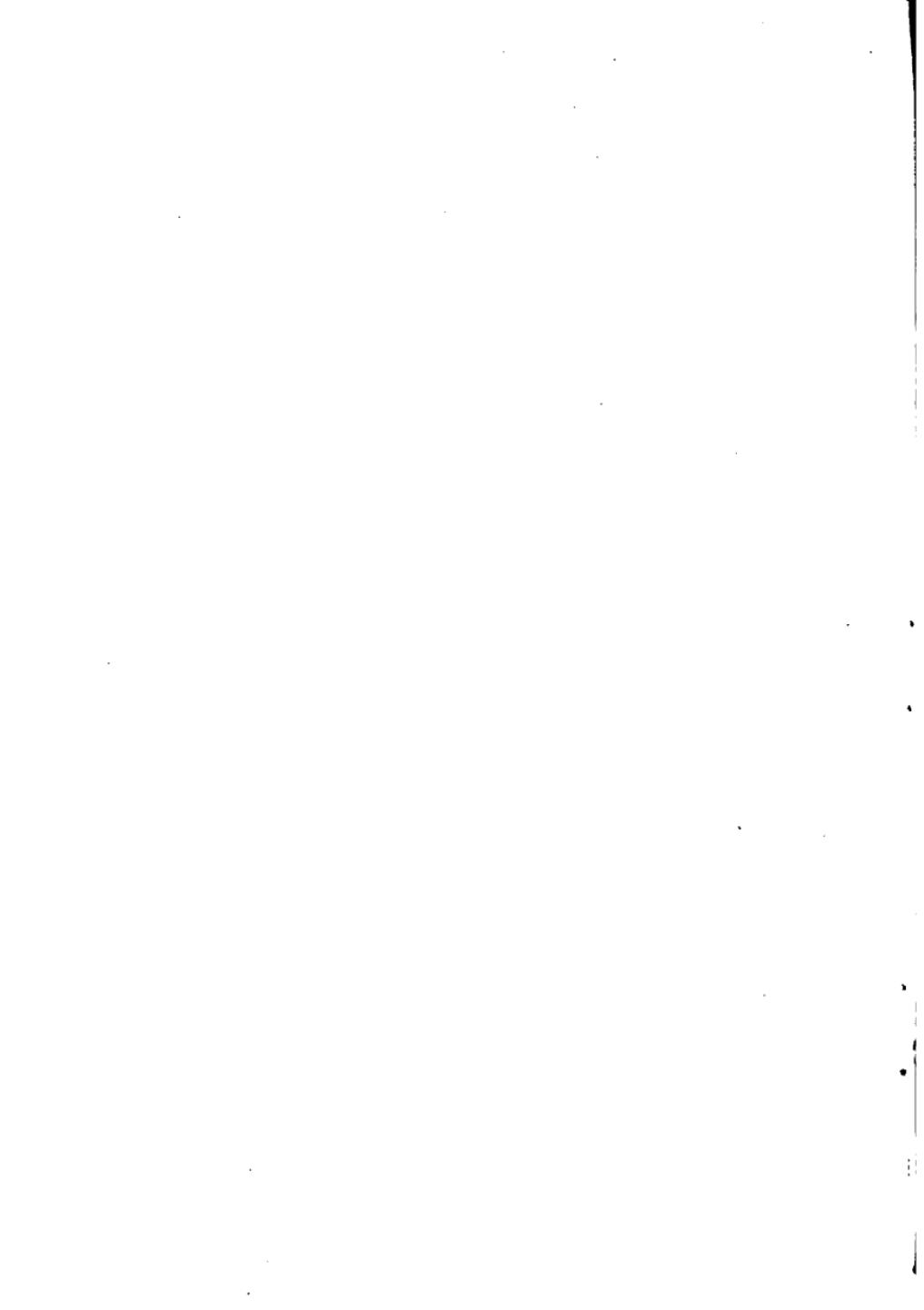
Had it pleased Heaven
 To try me with affliction ; had he rained
 All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head ;
 Steeped me in poverty to the very lips ;
 Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes ;
 I should have found in some part of my soul
 A drop of patience : but, alas ! to make me
 A fixèd figure for the time of scorn
 To point his slow, unmoving finger at ! —
 Yet could I bear that, too ; well, very well :
 But there, where I have garnered up my heart,
 Where either I must live, or bear no life,
 The fountain from the which my current runs,
 Or else dries up ; to be discarded thence !
 Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
 To knot and gender in ! — turn thy complexion there,
 Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubim, —
 Ay, there, look grim as hell !

Des.

I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

Oth.

O, ay ! as summer flies are in the shambles,
 That quicken even with blowing. O, thou weed,



Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet
 That the sense aches at thee,—would thou hadst ne'er
 been born.

Des.

Alas! what ignorant sin have I committed?

Oth.

Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
 Made to write bawd upon? What committed?
 Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;
 The wanton wind, that kisses all it meets,
 Is hushed within the hollow mine of earth,
 And will not hear it.—What committed?—
 Impudent wanton!

Des.

By Heaven, you do me wrong.

Oth.

Are not you a drab?

Des.

No, as I am a Christian.

Oth.

What!

Des.

No, as I shall be saved.

Oth.

I cry you mercy, then:

I took you for that cunning trash of Venice
 That married with Othello.—You, mistress,

[Addressed to *Emilia* at side, off.

That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,
 And keep the gate of hell!

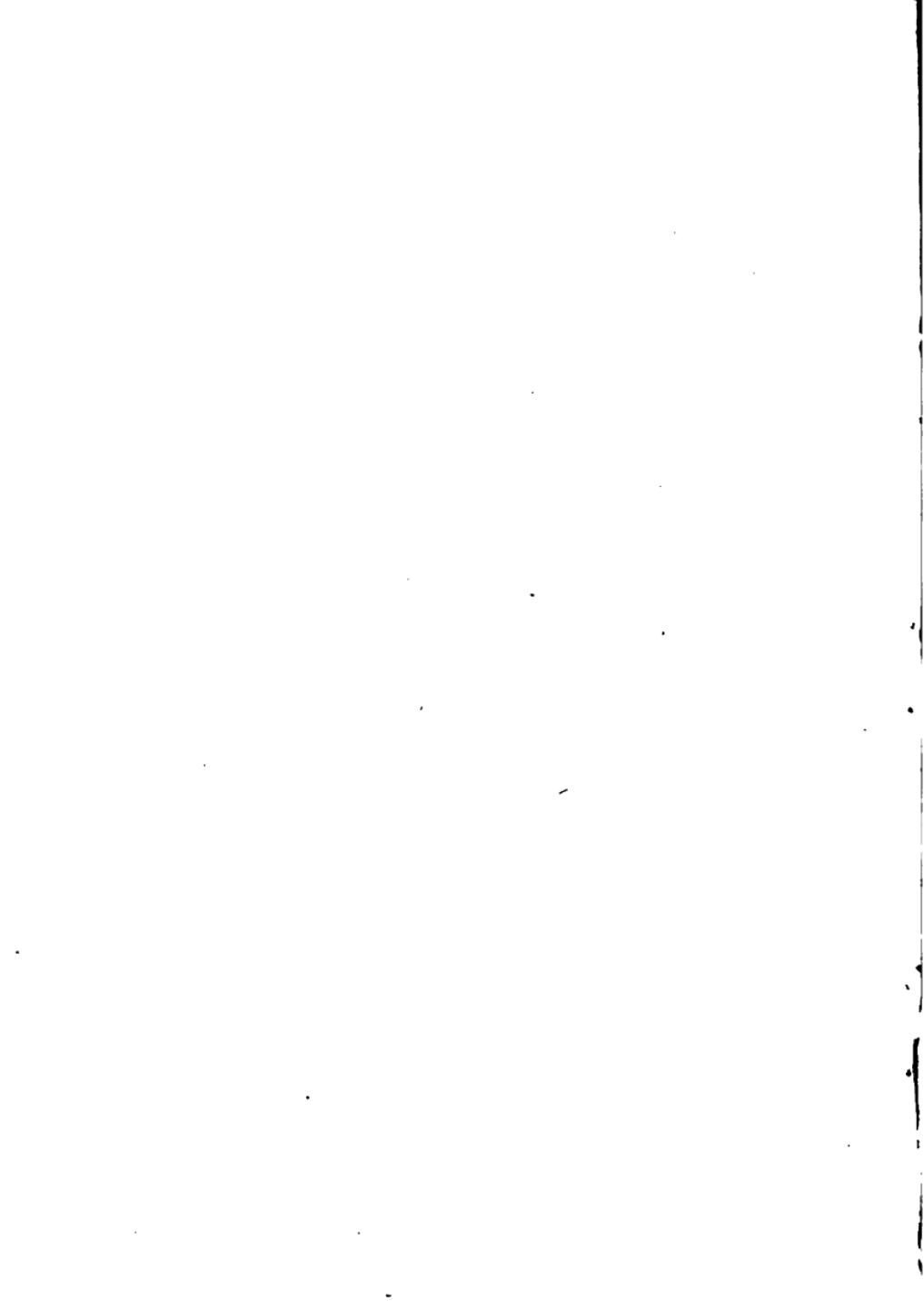
[*Desdemona* sinks to the floor.

[*Re-enter Emilia* R. I. E.

You, you, ay, you!

We have done our course; there's money for your pains:
 I pray you, turn the key, and keep our counsel.

[*Exit R. I. E.*



Emil.

Alas ! what does this gentleman conceive ?
How do you, madam ? how do you, my good lady ?
Good madam, what 's the matter with my lord ?

Des.

With whom ?

Emil.

Why, with my lord, madam.

Des.

Who is thy lord ?

Emil.

He that is yours, sweet lady.

Des.

I have none ; do not talk to me, Emilia ;
Pr'ythee, call thy husband hither.

Emil.

Here 's a change indeed !

[*Exit Emilia* L. I. E.

Des.

'T is meet I should be used so, very meet.
How have I been behaved, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my least misuse ?

[*Re-enter Emilia with Iago* L. I. E.

Iago.

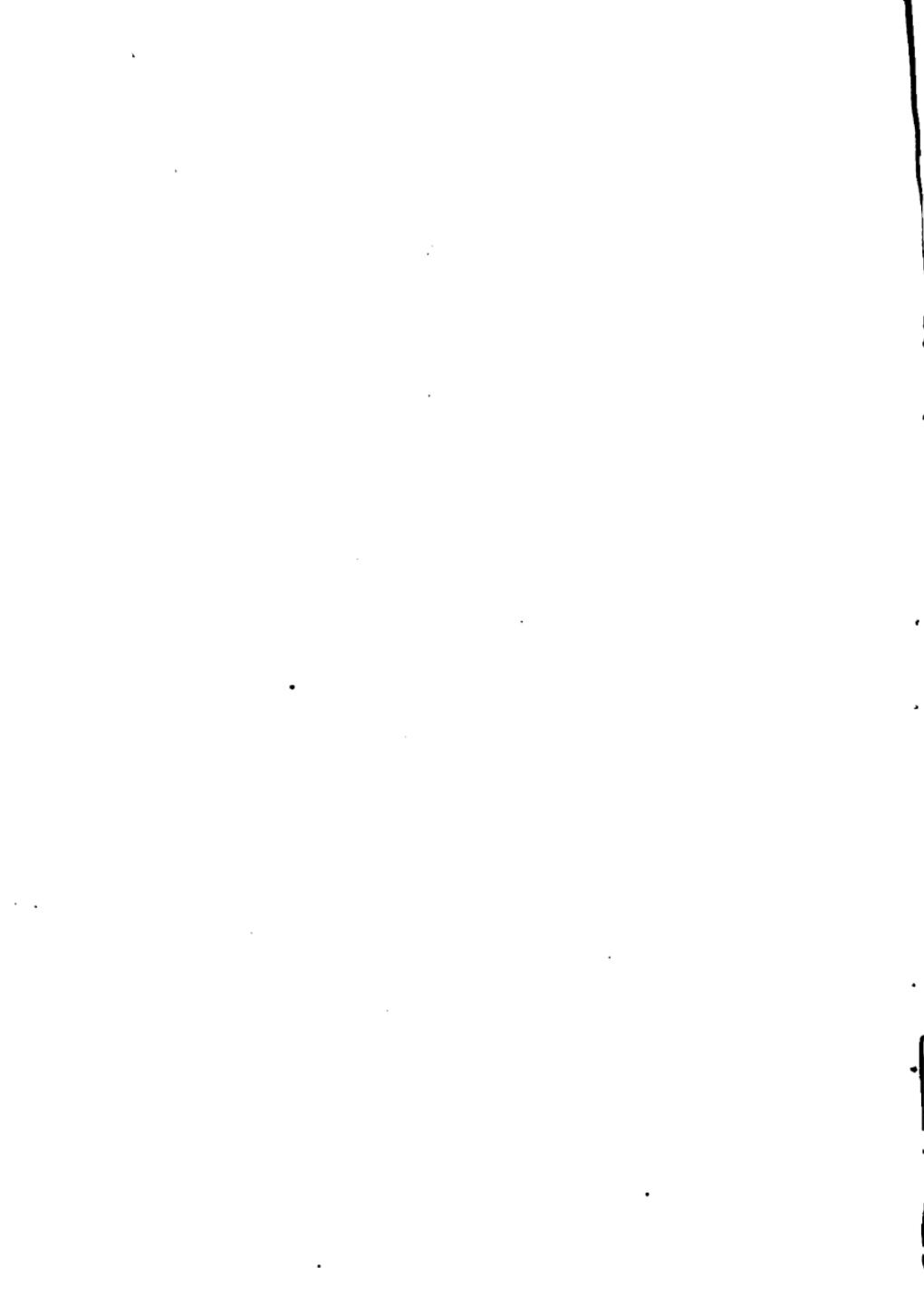
What is your pleasure, madam ? How is 't with you ?
What 's the matter, lady ?

Emil.

Alas ! Iago, my lord hath so abused her,
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.

Des.

Am I that name, Iago ?



Iago.

What name, fair lady ?

Des.

Such as she says my lord did say I was.

Emil.

A beggar in his drink could not have laid
Such terms upon his callat.

Iago.

Why did he so ?

Des.

I do not know ; I am sure I am none such.

Iago.

Do not weep, do not weep :—alas, the day !

Emil.

Has she forsook so many noble matches,
Her father, and her country, and her friends,
To be so called ? would it not make one weep ?

Iago.

Beshrew him for 't !

How comes this trick upon him ?

Des.

Nay, Heaven doth know.

Emil.

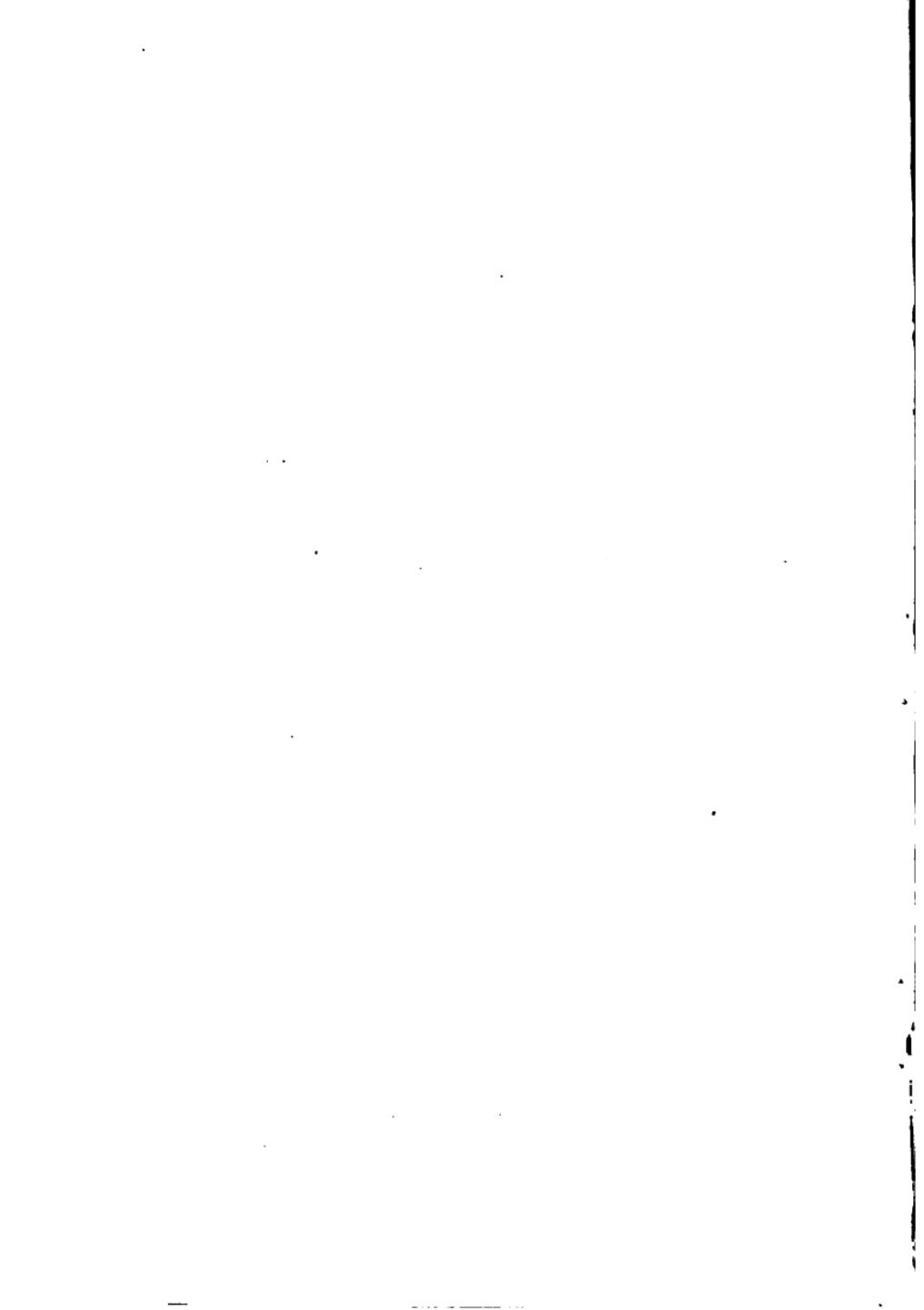
I will be hanged, if some eternal villain,

[*This is spoken without intended reference to Iago.*]

Some busy and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
Have not devised this slander ; I 'll be hanged, else.

Iago.

Fie, there is no such man ; it is impossible.



Des.

If any such there be, Heaven pardon him !

Emil.

A halter pardon him ! Who keeps her company ?
 What place ? what time ? what form ? what likelihood ?
 The Moor 's abused by some most villainous knave,
 Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow :—
 O Heaven, that such companions thou 'dst unfold,
 And put in every honest hand a whip
 To lash the rascals naked through the world !

Iago.

Speak within door.

Emil.

O, fie upon them ! Some such squire he was
 That turned your wit the seamy side without,
 And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago.

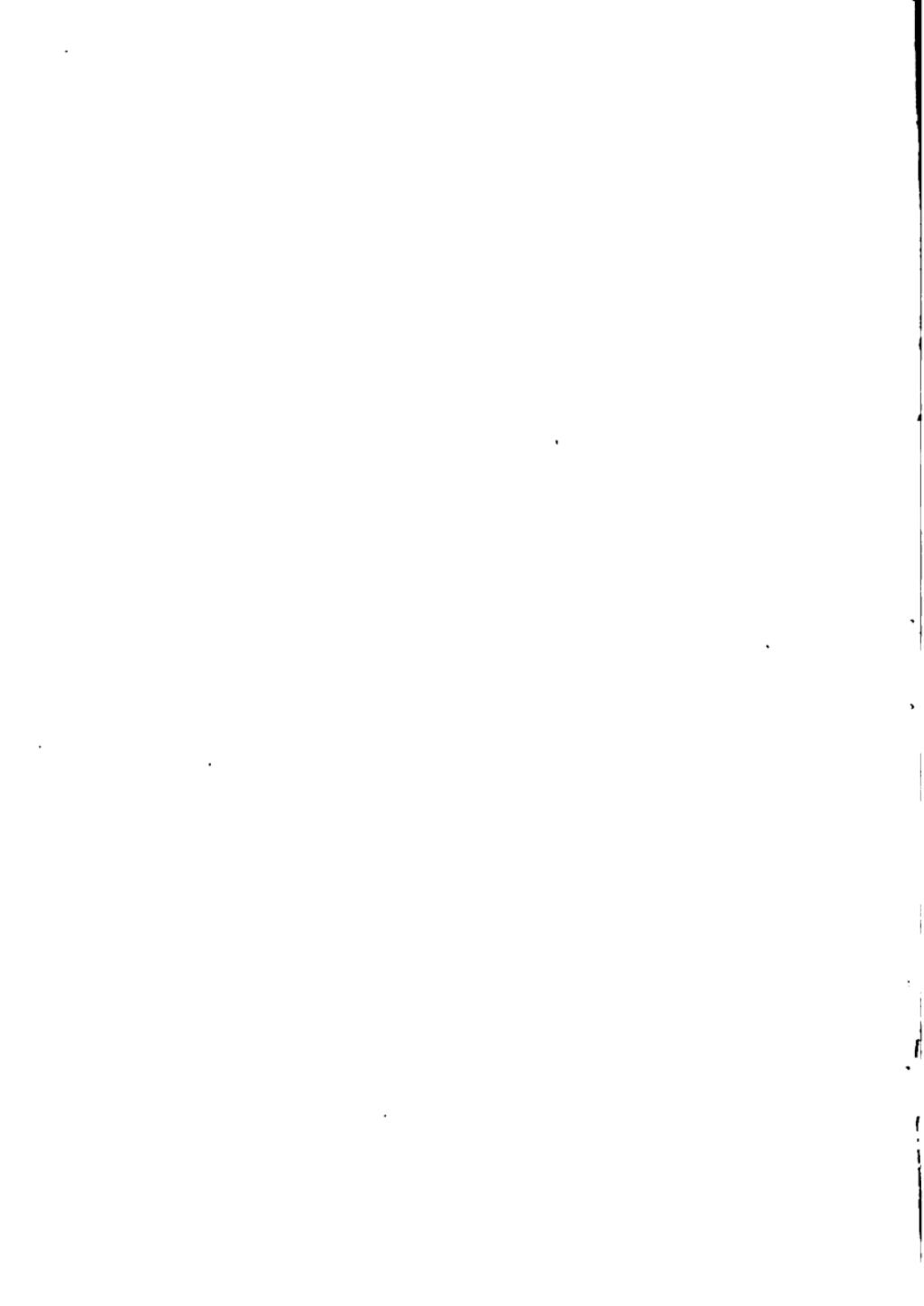
You are a fool ; go to.

Des.

O, good Iago,
 What shall I do to win my lord again ?
 Good friend, go to him ; for, by this light of heaven,
 I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel :— [Kneels.
 If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
 Either in discourse of thought or actual deed ;
 Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
 Delighted them in any other form ;
 Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
 And ever will,—though he do shake me off
 To beggarly divorcement,—love him dearly,
 Comfort forswear me ! Unkindness may do much ;
 And his unkindness may defeat my life,
 But never taint my love.

Iago.

I pray you, be content ; 't is but his humour :
 The business of the state does him offence,
 And he does chide with you.



Des.

If 't were no other —

Iago.

'T is but so, I warrant.

Weep not; all things shall be well.

[*Exit Iago L.*

[*This scene sometimes ends here, with—Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia R. and Iago L.—and then the change is made to dark street for Iago and Roderigo. Otherwise the scene continues as follows:*

Des.

Good Father! how foolish are our minds!—

Emilia—lay on my bed, to-night, my wedding sheets.—

If I do die before thee, prithee shroud me

In one of them.

Emil.

[*Soothingly.*

Come, come, you talk.

Des.

My mother had a maid called Barbara;
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad,
And did forsake her: she had a song of willow,
An old thing 't was, but it expressed her fortune,
And she died singing it. That song, to-night,
Will not go from my mind. I have much to do
But to go hang my head all at one side,
And sing it like poor Barbara.

[*Sings.*

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,

Sing all a green willow!

Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,

Sing willow, willow, willow!

The fresh streams ran by her and murmured her moans,

Sing willow, willow, willow!

Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones,

Sing willow, willow, willow!

Sing all a green willow must be my garland!
Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve —

Nay, that 's not next.— Hark! who is 't that knocks?



Emil.

It 's the wind.

Des.

[*Singing again.*

I called my love, false love ; — but what said he then ?

Sing all a green willow !

Sing willow, willow —

[*Desdemona falters in her song, breaks down completely, and bursts into a flood of tears ; then, presently, in imploring accents, she speaks :*

Heaven me such usage send,
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend !

[*Desdemona is supported and led off by Emilia.— The scene changes.*

Scene Third.—A DARK STREET. IAGO'S HOUSE, R. U. E.

[*Enter Iago from his house. Enter Roderigo, meeting Iago.*

Iago.

How now, Roderigo !

Rod.

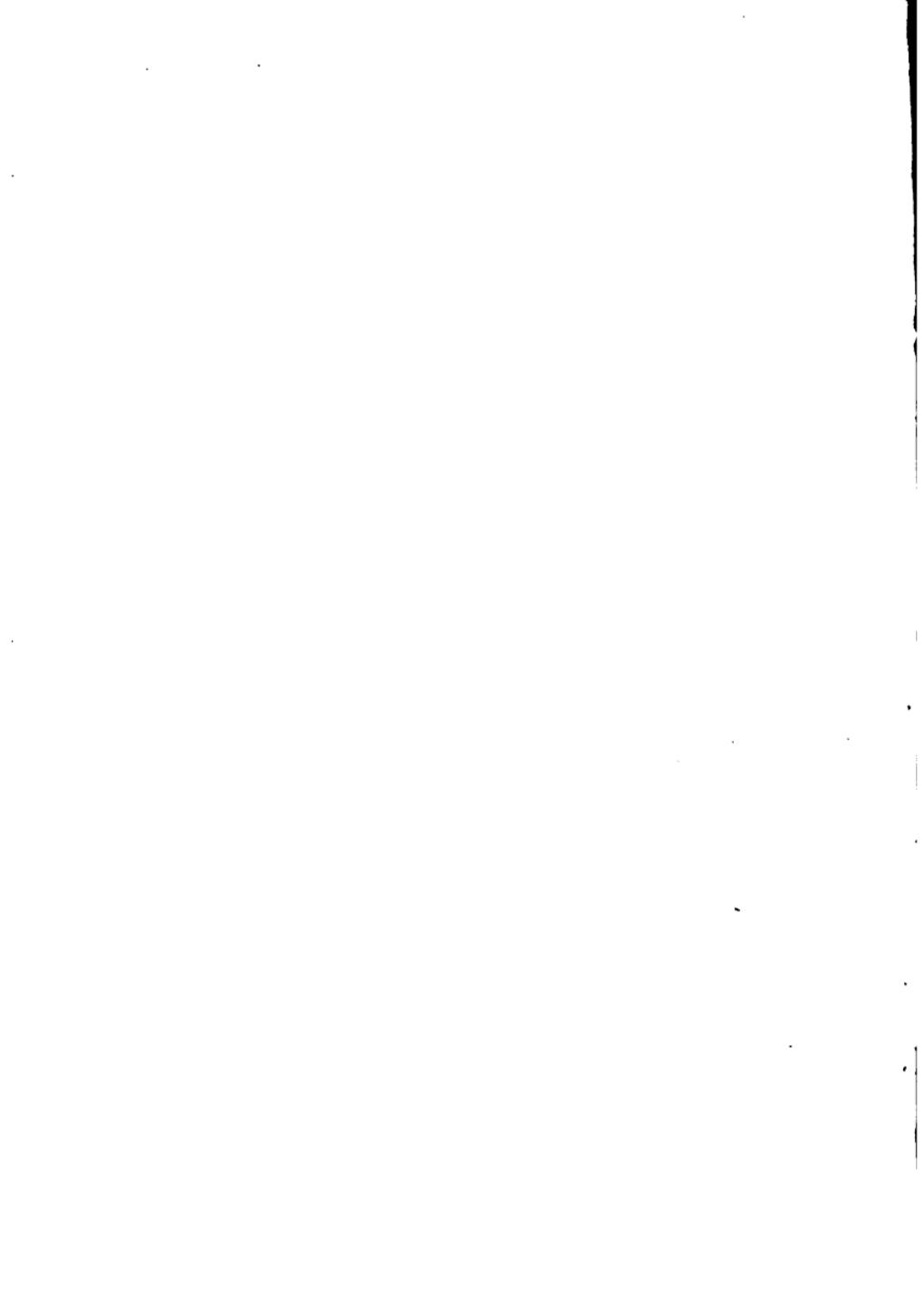
I do not find that thou dealest justly with me.

Iago.

What in the contrary ?

Rod.

Every day thou daff'st me with some device, Iago ; and rather, as it seems to me now, keepest from me all convenience than suppliest me with the least advantage of hope. I will, indeed, no longer endure it ; nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace what already I have foolishly suffered.



Iago.

Will you hear me, Roderigo ?

Rod.

'Faith, I have heard too much ; for your words and performances are no kin together.

Iago.

You charge me most unjustly.

Rod.

With naught but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona would half have corrupted a votarist : you have told me she has received them, and returned me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquaintance ; but I find none.

Iago.

Well ; go to ; very well.

Rod.

Very well ! go to ! I cannot go to, man ; nor 't is not very well : by this hand, I say, it is very scurvy, and begin to find myself fobbed in it.

Iago.

Very well.

Rod.

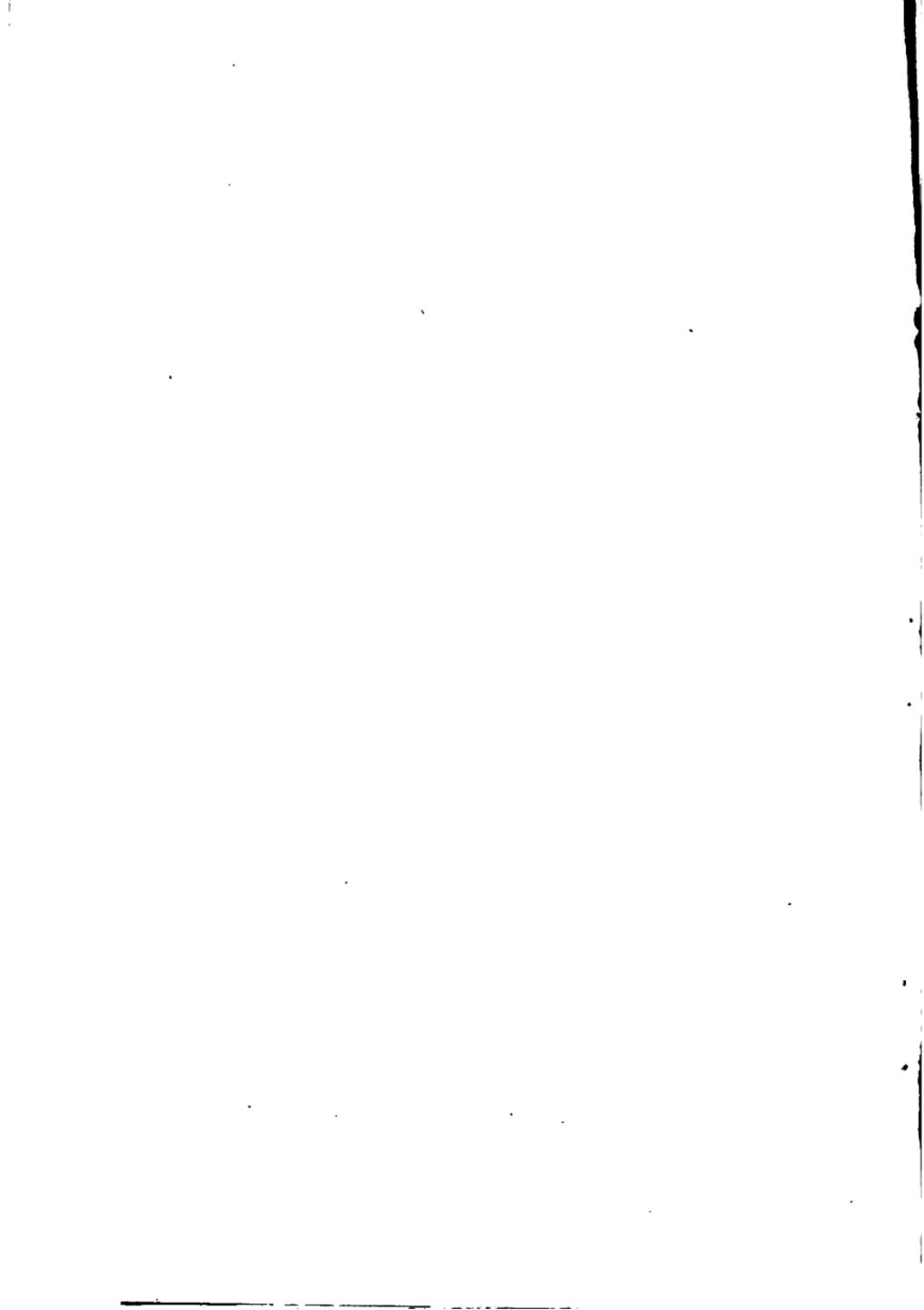
I tell you 't is not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona : if she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit, and repent my unlawful solicitation ; if not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

Iago.

You have said now.

Rod.

Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.



Iago.

Why, now I see there 's mettle in thee ; and even from this instant do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo : thou hast taken against me a most just exception ; but yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

Rod.

It hath not appeared.

Iago.

I grant, indeed, it hath not appeared ; and your suspicion is not without wit and judgment. But, Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever,—I mean purpose, courage, and valour,—this night show it : if thou the next night following win not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for my life.

Rod.

Well, what is it ? is it within reason and compass ?

Iago.

Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

Rod.

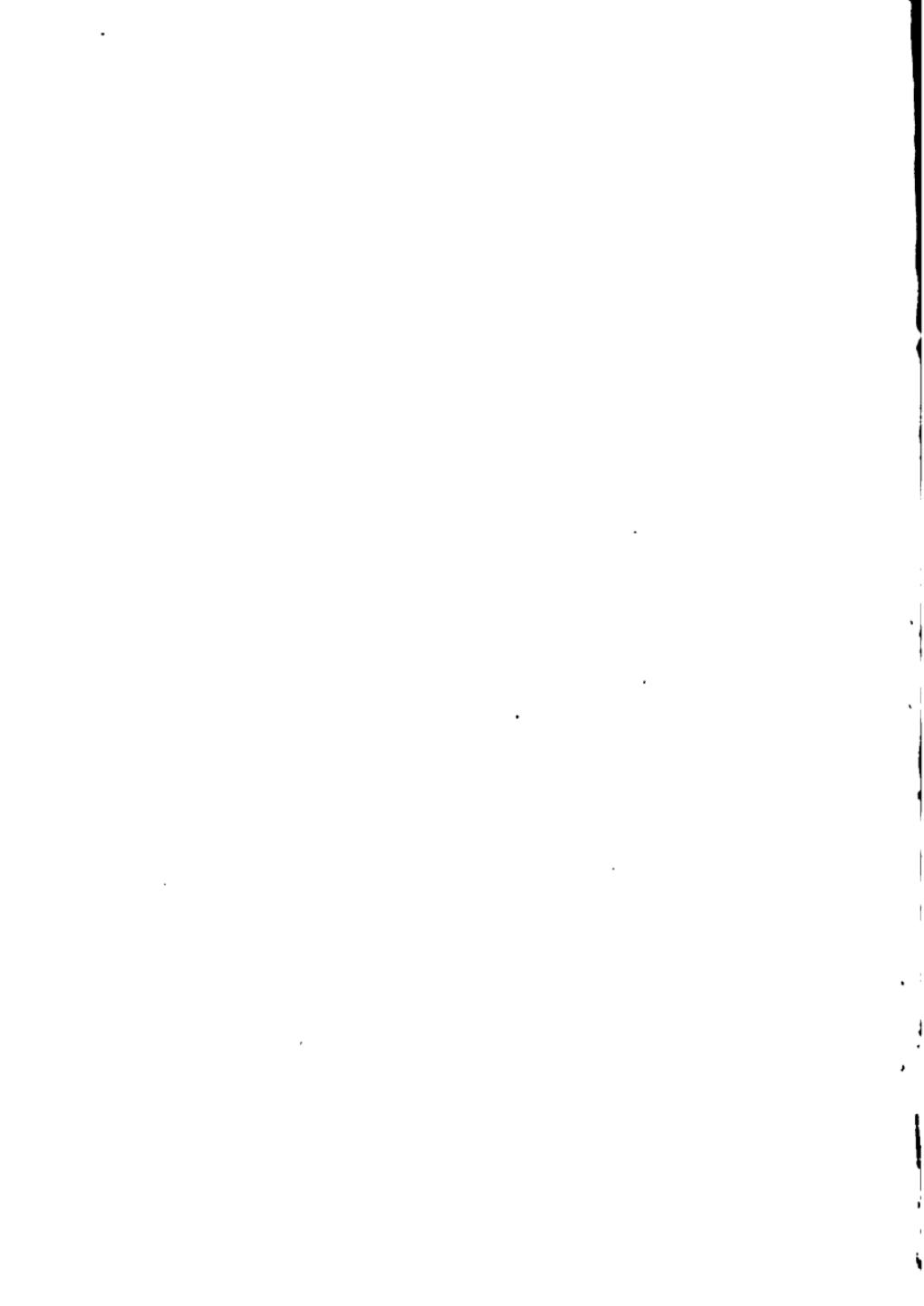
Is that true ? why then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

Iago.

O, no ; he goes into Mauritania, and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident : wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.

Rod.

How do you mean removing of him ?



Iago.

Why, by making him uncapable of Othello's place,—
knocking out his brains.

Rod.

And that you would have me to do ?

Iago.

Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups to-night with his mistress, and this way he will come : —he knows not yet of his honourable fortune. You may take him at your pleasure : I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us.

Here, stand behind this bulk ; straight will he come ;
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home.
It makes us, or it mars us ; think on that,
And fix most firm thy resolution.

Rod.

Be near at hand ; I may miscarry in 't.

Iago.

Here, at thy hand ; be bold, and take thy stand.

[Retires to a little distance ; then into his house.

Rod.

I have no great devotion to the deed ;

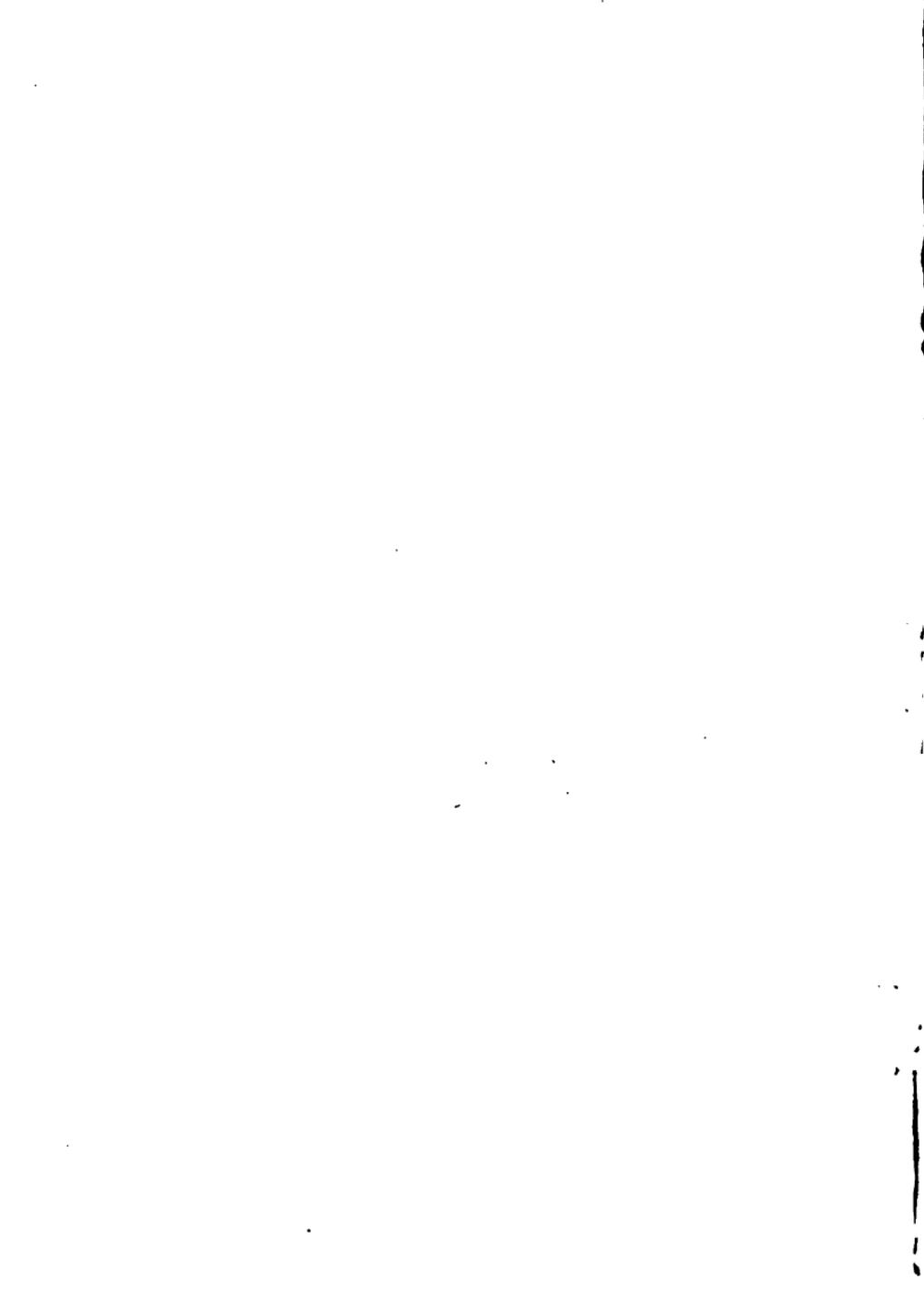
And yet : —

'T is but a man gone : —forth, my sword ; he dies.

[Goes to his stand.

Iago. [Appearing at door.

Now, whether he kill Cassio,
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
Every way makes my gain : live Roderigo,
He calls me to a restitution large
Of gold and jewels that I fobbed from him,
As gifts to Desdemona ;
It must not be : if Cassio do remain,



He hath a daily beauty in his life
 That makes me ugly ; and, besides, the Moor
 May unfold me to him ; there stand I in much peril :
 No, he must die :—I hear him coming.

[Enter Cassio c.

Rod.

I know his gait ; 't is he.—Villain, thou diest !

[Rushes from his post, and makes a pass at Cassio.

Cas.

That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,
 But that my coat is better than thou knowest :
 I will make proof of thine.

[They fight, and Cassio wounds Roderigo.

Rod.

[Falls.

O, I am slain !

[Iago starts from his post, cuts Cassio behind in the
 leg, and rushes out.

Cas.

I am maimed for ever.—Help, ho ! murder ! murder !
 [Falls.
 What, ho ! no watch ? no passage ? murder ! murder !

Rod.

O, wretched villain !

Nobody come ? then shall I bleed to death.

[Re-enter Iago, half dressed, and with a light.

Iago.

What are you here that cry so grievously ?

Cas.

Iago ? O, I am spoiled, undone by villains !
 Give me some help.

Iago.

O, me, lieutenant ! what villains have done this ?

Cas.

I think that one of them is hereabout,
And cannot make away.

Rod.

O, help me here!

Cas.

That 's one of them.

Iago.

O, murderous slave! O, villain!

[*Stabs Roderigo.—Cassio takes Desdemona's hand-kerchief—the gift of Othello—from his pocket, and binds his leg.*

Rod.

O, damned Iago! O, inhuman dog!

[*Faints.*]*Iago.*

Kill men i' the dark!—Where be these bloody thieves?—
How silent is this town!—

[*As he is about to stab Cassio, he sees Lodovico and Gratiano approaching.*

Ho! murder! murder!

What may you be? are you of good or evil?

Lod.

As you shall prove us, praise us.

Iago.

Signior Lodovico?

Lod.

He, sir.

Iago.

I cry you mercy.—Here 's Cassio hurt by villains.

Grat.

Cassio!

How is 't, brother?

Iago.

[*To Cassio.*

My leg is cut in two.

Cas.

Iago.

Marry, Heaven forbid!—

Know we this face or no? [*Looking closely upon Roderigo.*

Alas! my friend and my dear countryman

Roderigo? no:—yes, sure; O, heaven! Roderigo.

[*Emilia at window.*

Emil.

Alas! what 's the matter? what 's the matter, husband?

Iago.

Cassio hath here been set on in the dark

By Roderigo, and fellows that are 'scaped;

He 's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

Emil.

Alas! good gentleman; alas! good Cassio!

Iago.

Emilia, run you to the citadel,

And tell my lord and lady what hath happened.—

Will you go on, I pray?

[*To the others.*

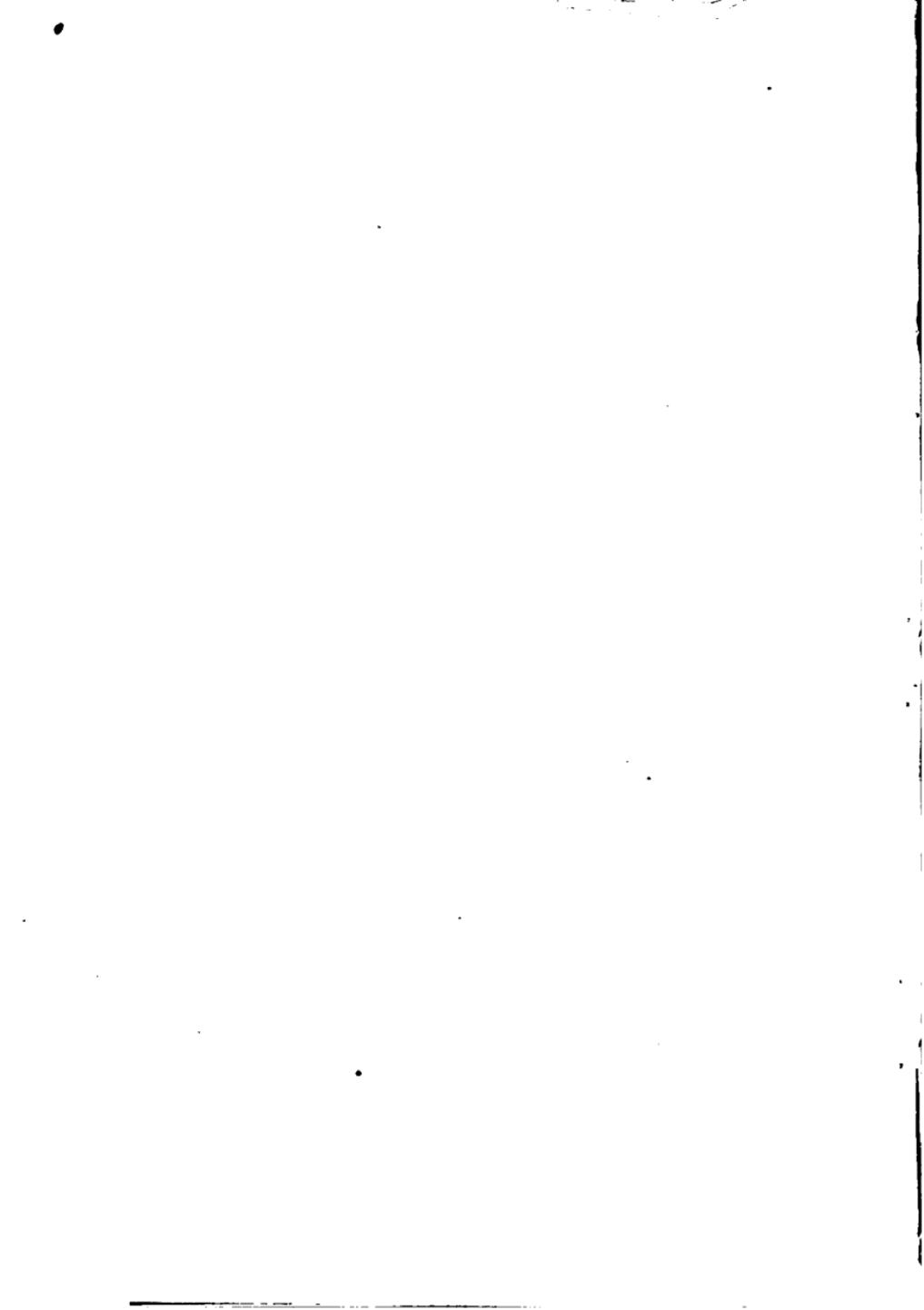
[*Exeunt all but Iago.*

This is the night

That either makes me, or fordoes me quite.

CURTAIN.





Act fifth.

Scene First.

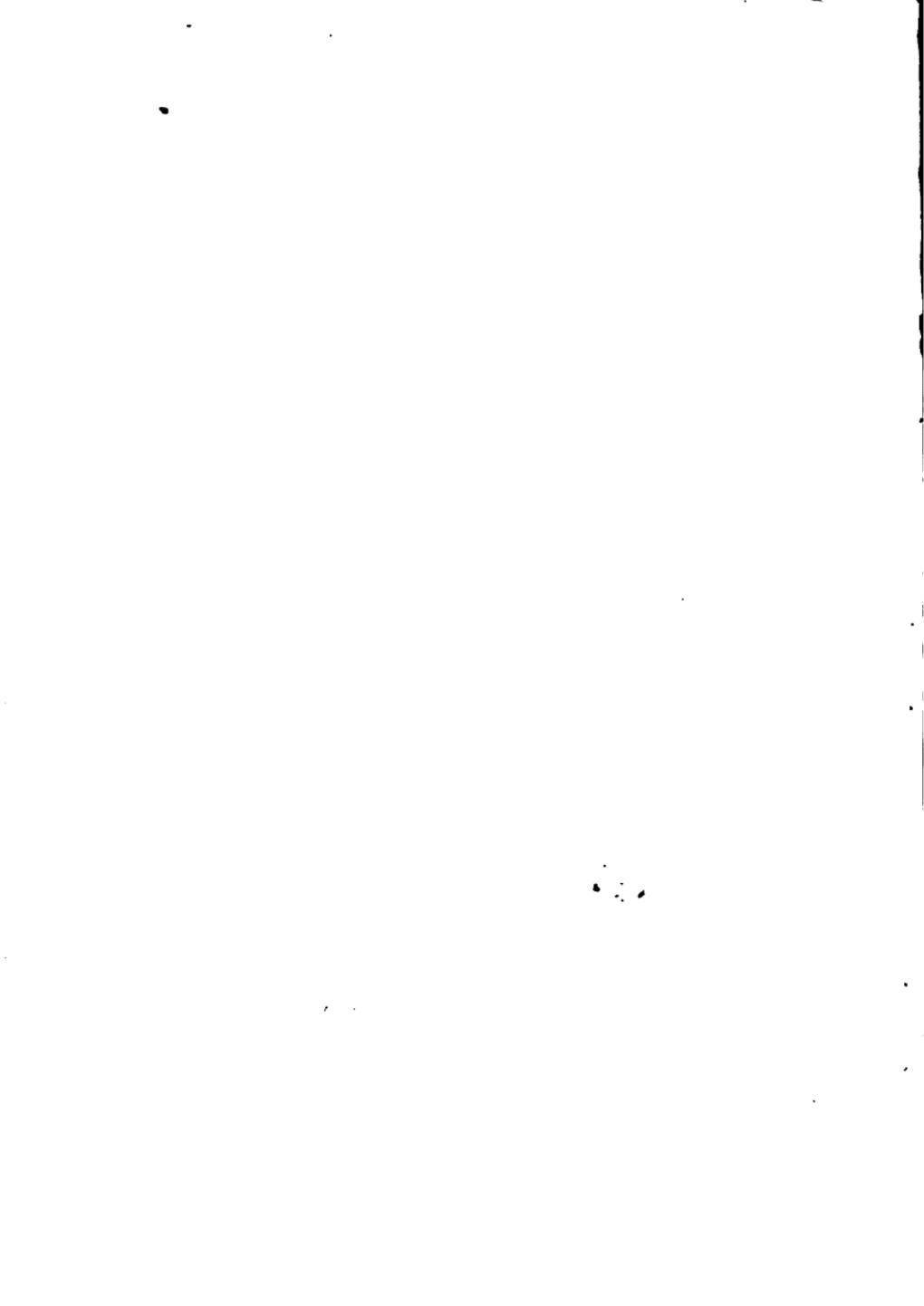
{ A BEDCHAMBER IN THE CASTLE. RAISED BED L., OPPOSITE TO LARGE WINDOW R. MOONLIGHT STREAMS THROUGH WINDOW AND FALLS UPON BED. DOOR C. OTTOMAN C. A LIGHT BURNING ON TABLE. DESDEMONA IN BED, ASLEEP, DISCOVERED. OTHELLO ALSO DISCOVERED.

Oth.

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!—
It is the cause.—Yet I 'll not shed her blood;
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she 'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then— Put out the light!
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me:—but once put out thine,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have plucked the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again;
It needs must wither:— I 'll smell it on the tree.—

[*Kissing Desdemona.*

O, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword!—One more, one more:
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after:—one more, and that 's the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow 's heavenly;
It strikes where it doth love.—She wakes.



Des.

Who 's there ? Othello ?

Oth.

Ay, Desdemona.

Have you prayed to-night, Desdemona ?

Des.

Ay, my lord.

Oth.

If you bethink yourself of any crime

Unreconciled as yet to Heaven and grace,

Solicit for it straight.

Des.

Alack, my lord, what may you mean by that ?

Oth.

Well, do it, and be brief ; I will walk by :

I would not kill thy unprepared spirit ;

No,—Heaven forfend!—I would not kill thy soul.

Des.

Talk you of killing ?

Oth.

Ay, I do.

Des.

Then Heaven have mercy on me !

Oth.

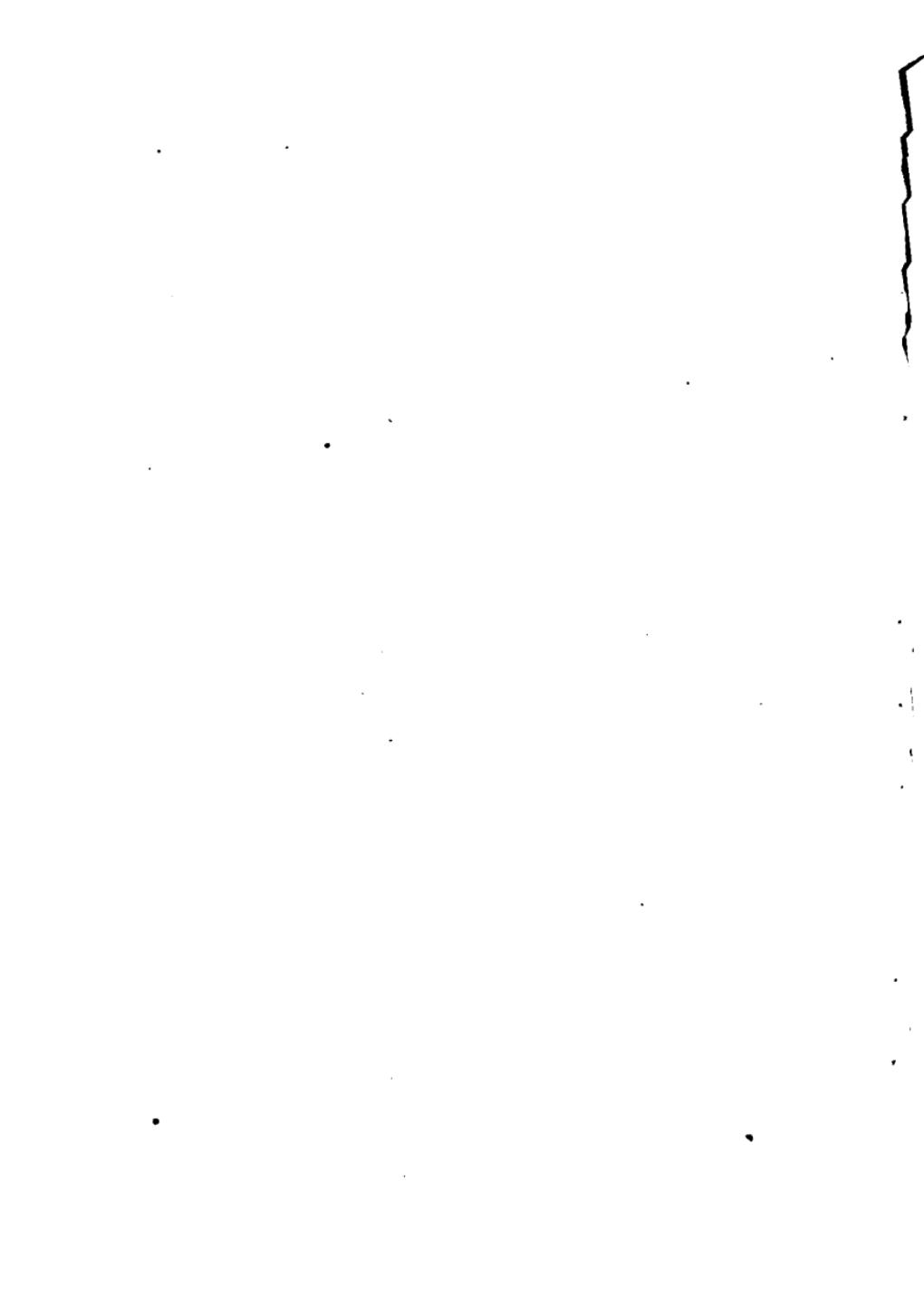
Amen, with all my heart !

Des.

If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

Oth.

H'm !



Des.

And yet I fear you: for you are fatal then,
When your eyes roll so: why I should fear I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear.

Oth.

Think on thy sins.

Des.

They are loves I bear to you.

Oth.

Ay, and for that thou diest.

Des.

That death 's unnatural that kills for loving.—
Alas! why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame.

Oth.

Peace and be still!

Des.

I will so. What 's the matter?

Oth.

That handkerchief which I so loved, and gave thee,
Thou gav'st to Cassio.

Des.

No, by my life and soul!
Send for the man, and ask him.

Oth.

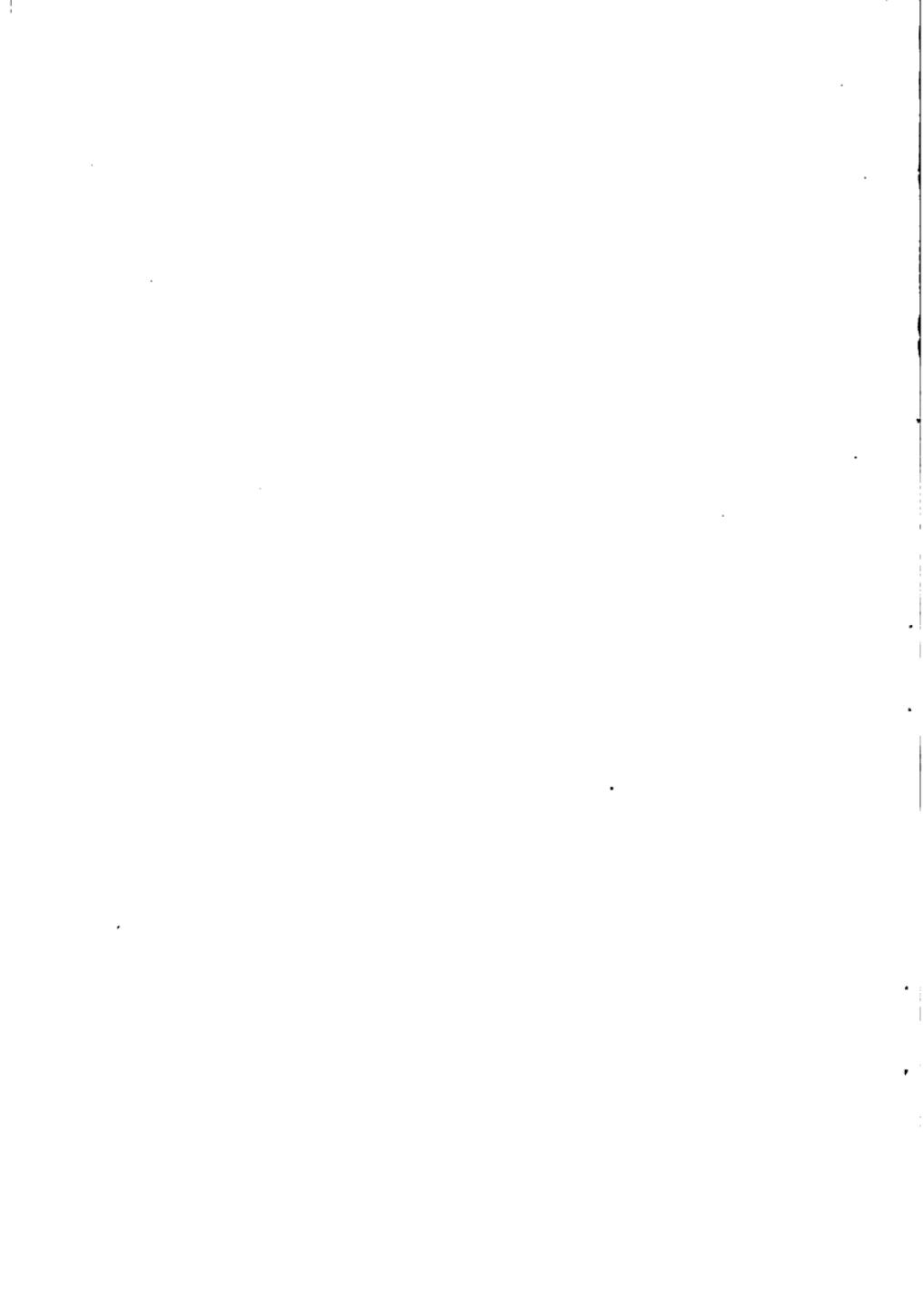
Sweet soul, take heed,
Take heed of perjury; thou art on thy death-bed.

Des.

Ay, but not yet to die.

Oth.

Yes, presently:
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin:



For to deny each article with oath
 Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception
 That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

Des.

Then Lord have mercy on me !

Oth.

I say, Amen !

Des.

And have you mercy, too! — I never did
 Offend you in my life ; never loved Cassio
 But with such general warranty of Heaven
 As I might love ; I never gave him token.

Oth.

By Heaven, I saw my handkerchief in 's hand.
 O, perjured woman ! thou dost stone my heart,
 And mak'st me call what I intend to do
 A murder, which I thought a sacrifice :
 I saw the handkerchief.

Des.

He found it then ;
 I never gave it him : — send for him hither ;
 Let him confess a truth.

Oth.

His mouth is stopped ;
 Honest Iago hath ta'en order for 't.

Des.

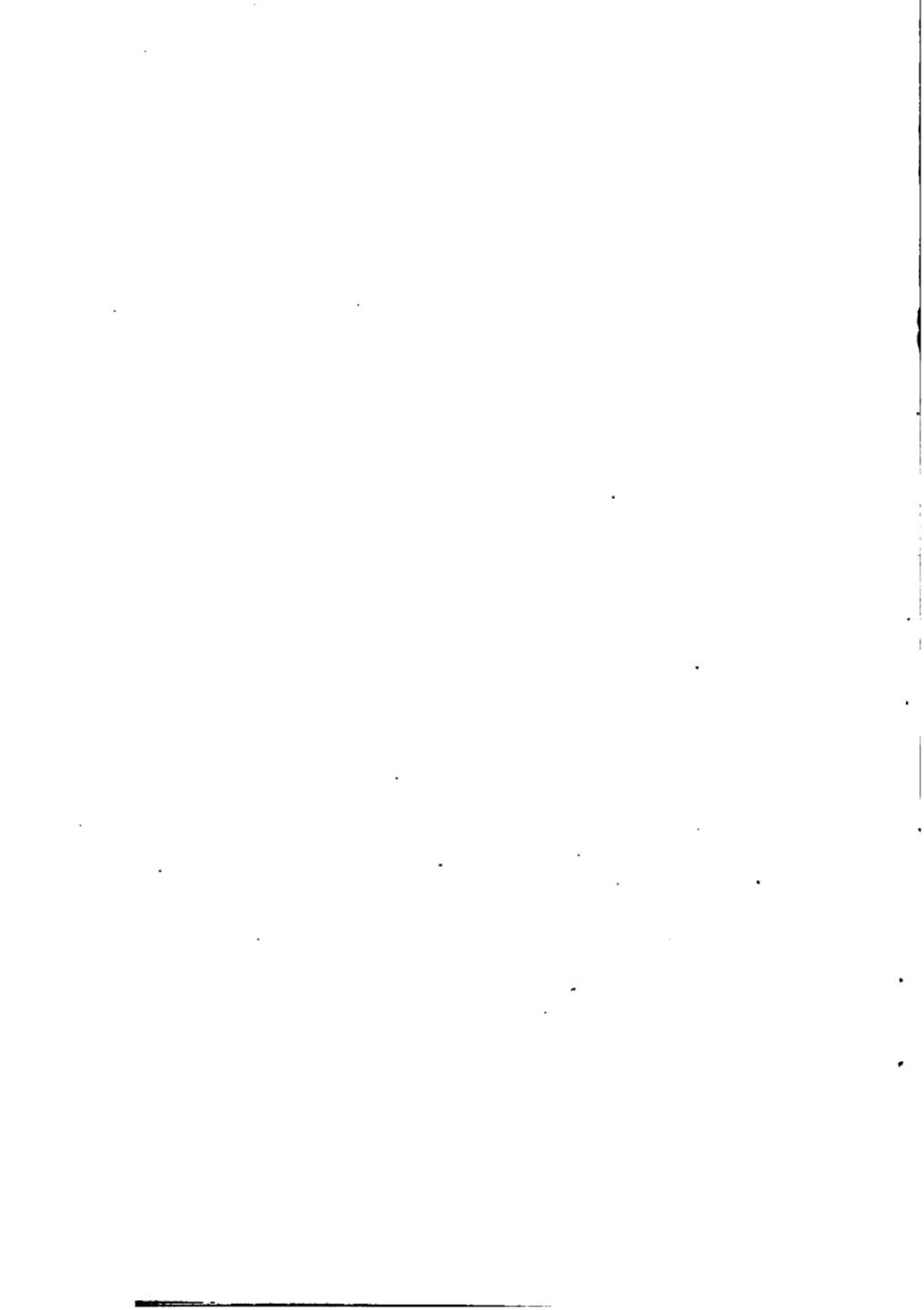
O, my fear interprets ! — what ! is he dead ?

Oth.

Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
 Had stomach for them all.

Des.

Alas ! he is betrayed, and I undone !



Oth.

Out, wanton ! weep'st thou for him to my face ?

Des.

O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not !

Oth.

Down, wanton !

Des.

Kill me to-morrow ; let me live to-night !

Oth.

Nay, if you strive —

Des.

But half an hour !

Oth.

Being done, there is no pause.

Des.

But while I say one prayer !

Oth.

It is too late.

[*Smothers her.—Long pause.*

[*Knocking is heard at door. This to be made by Emilia.*

What noise is this ? — Not dead ? not yet quite dead ?

I that am cruel am yet merciful ;

I would not have thee linger in thy pain : —

So, so.

[*Stabs Desdemona.*

[*Another pause.—More knocking.*

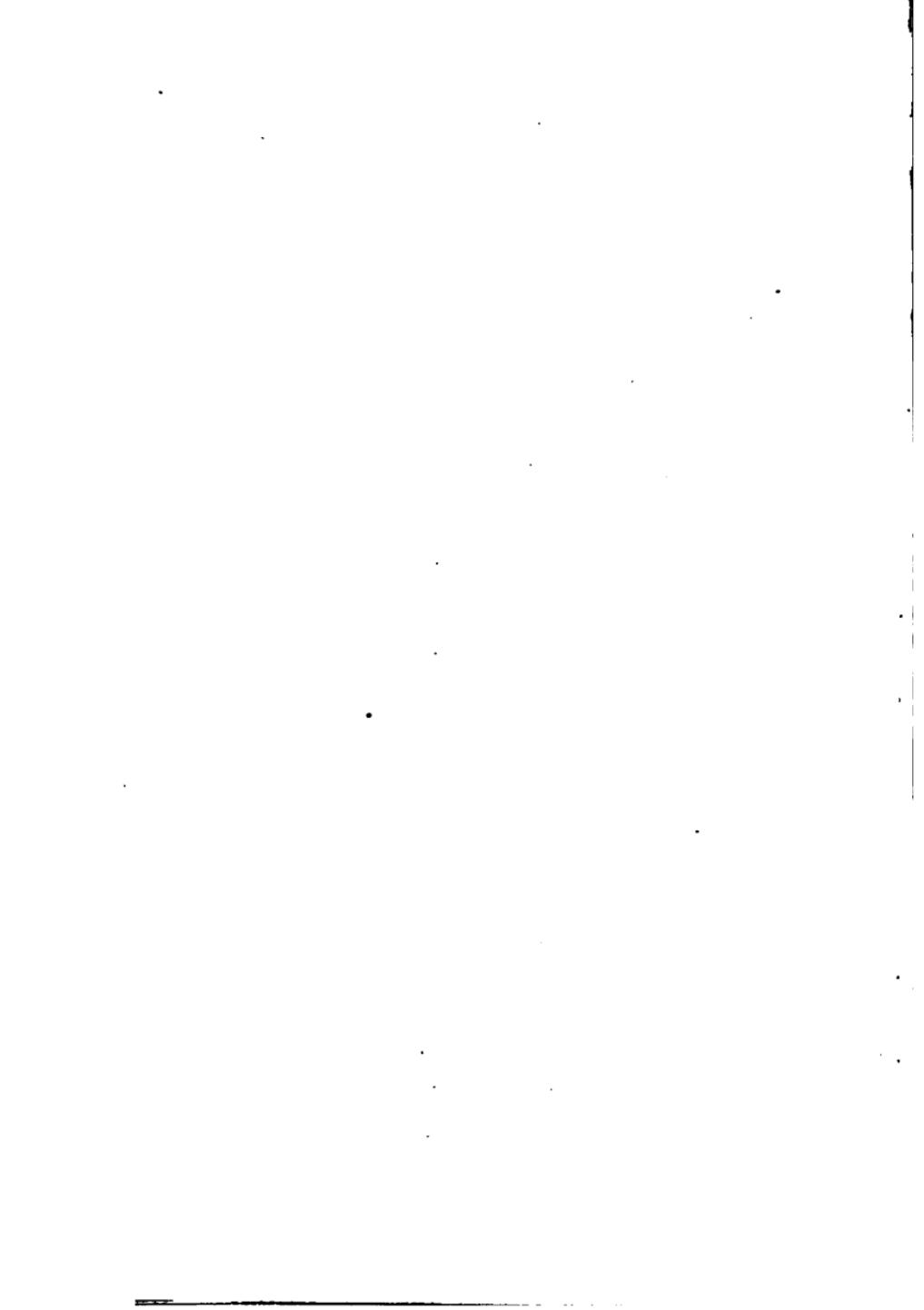
Emil.

[*Within.*

What, ho ! my lord ! my lord !

Oth.

Who 's there ?



Emil.

[Within.]

O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you !

Oth.

Yes :— 't is Emilia :— by and by.— She 's dead.—
 'T is like she comes to speak of Cassio's death ;
 The noise was high.— Ha ! no more moving ?—
 Still as the grave.— Shall she come in ? were 't good ?—
 I think she stirs again :— no.— What 's best to do ?
 If she come in, she 'll sure speak to my wife :
 My wife ! my wife ! what wife ?—I have no wife.
 O, insupportable ! O, heavy hour !
 Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
 Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
 Should yawn at alteration. [Knocking.]

Emil.

[Within.]

I do beseech you
 That I may speak with you, O, good my lord !

Oth.

I had forgot thee : O, come in, Emilia :—
 Soft,— by and by :— let me the curtains draw.—

[Draws curtains of bed :— then opens the door.]

Where art thou ? [Enter Emilia c., with a light.]
 What 's the matter with thee now ?

Emil.

O, my good lord, yonder 's foul murder done.

Oth.

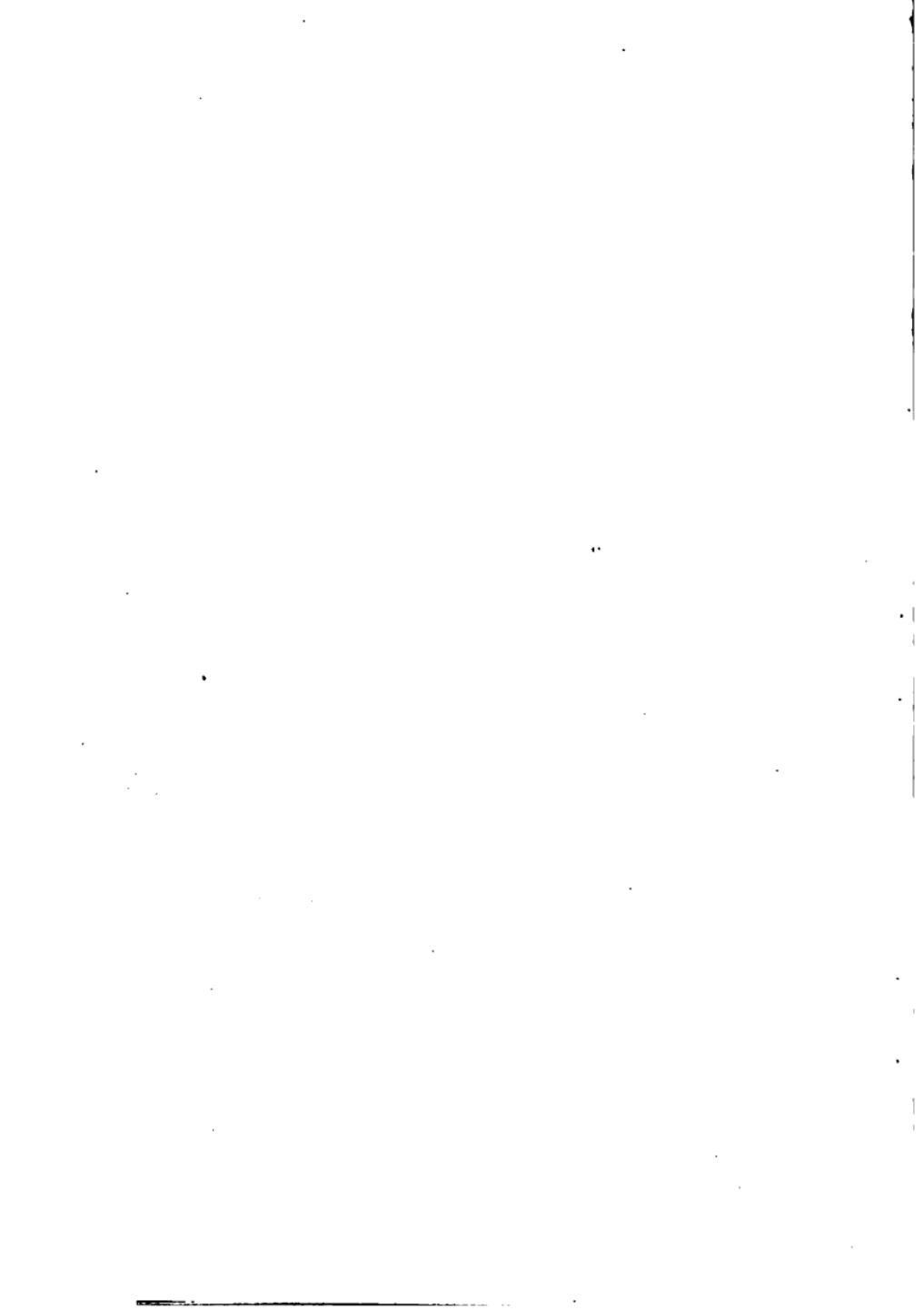
What, now ?

Emil.

But now, my lord.

Oth.

It is the very error of the moon ;
 She comes more near the earth than she was wont,
 And makes men mad.



Emil.

Cassio, my lord, has killed a young Venetian
Called Roderigo.

Oth.

Roderigo killed !
And Cassio killed !

Emil.

No, Cassio is not killed.

Oth.

Not Cassio killed ! then murder 's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

Des.

O, falsely, falsely murdered !

Emil.

Alas ! what cry is that ?

Oth.

That ! what ?

Emil.

Out, and alas ! that was my lady's voice.—

[Rushes to Desdemona.]
Help ! help ! ho ! help ! — O, lady, speak again !
Sweet Desdemona ! O, sweet mistress, speak !

Des.

A guiltless death I die.

Emil.

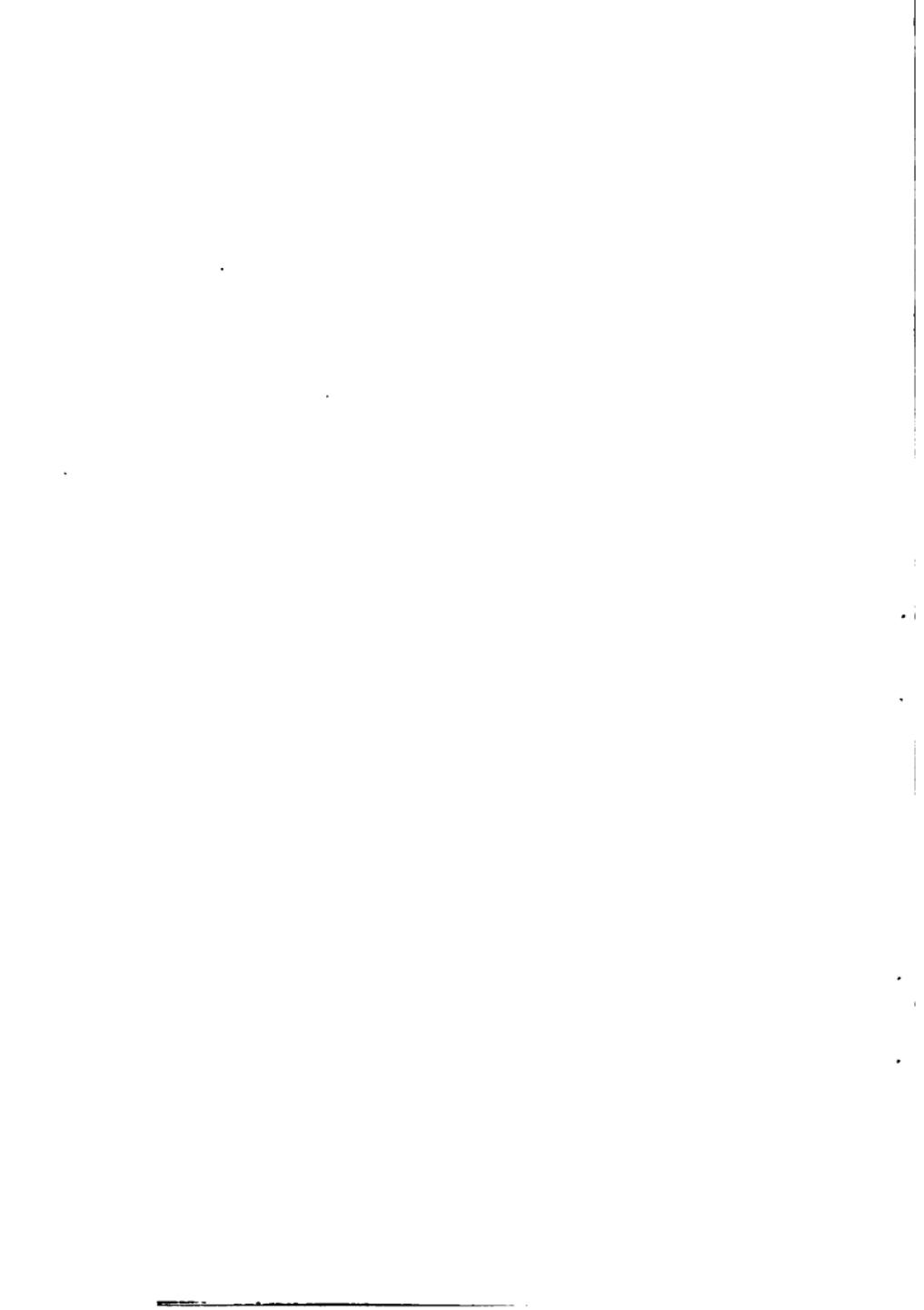
O, who hath done this deed ?

Des.

Nobody ; I myself. Farewell :
Commend me to my kind lord : O, farewell ! [Dies.]

Oth.

Why, how should she be murdered ?



Emil.

Alas ! who knows ?

Oth.

You heard her say herself, it was not I.

Emil.

She said so : I must needs report the truth.

*Oth.*She 's, like a liar, gone to burning hell :
'T was I that killed her.*Emil.*O, the more angel she,
And you the blacker devil !*Oth.*

She turned to folly, and she was a drab.

Emil.

Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil !

Oth.

She was false as water.

*Emil.*Thou art rash as fire, to say
That she was false : O, she was heavenly true !*Oth.*O, I were damned beneath all depth in hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.*Emil.*

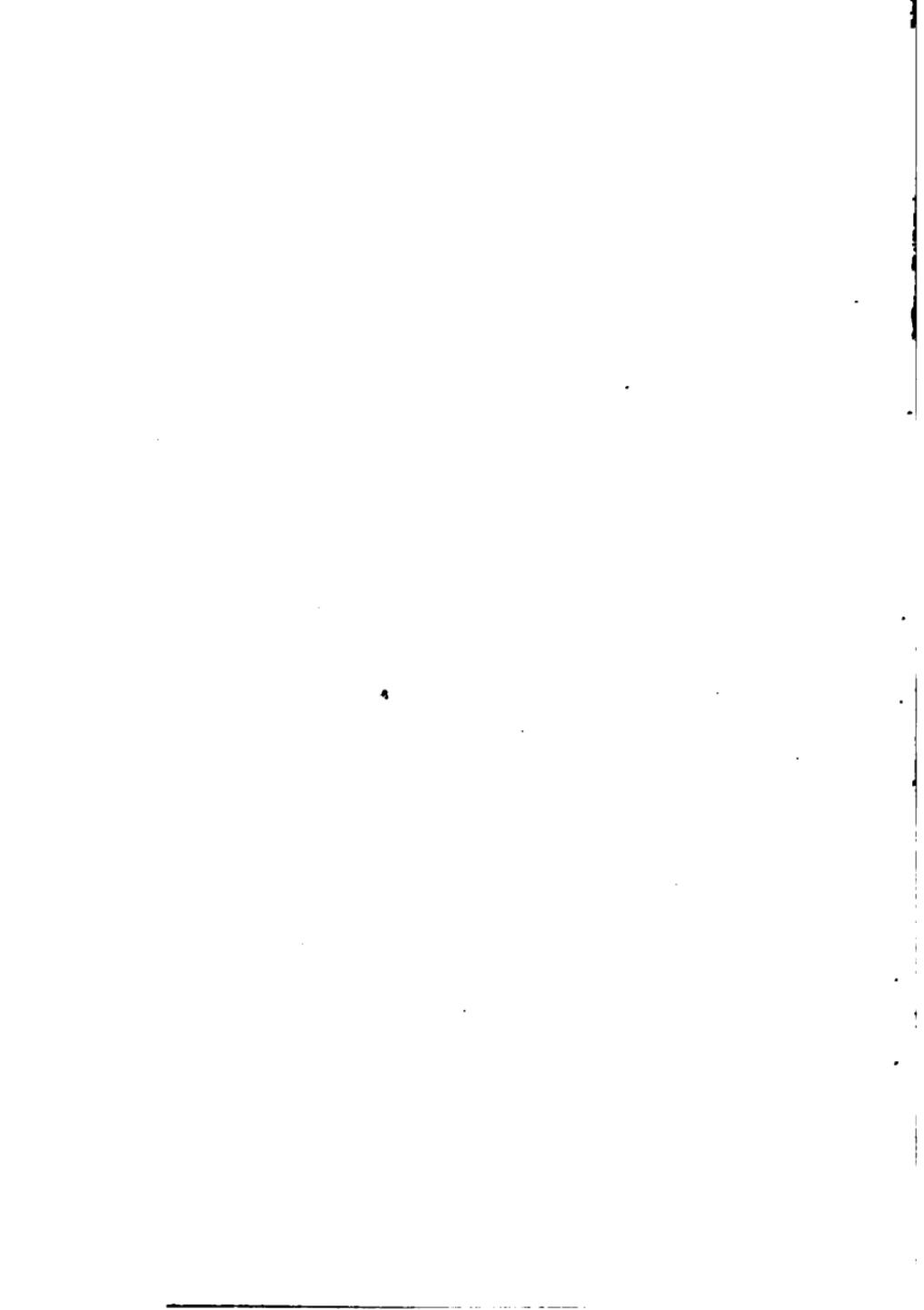
My husband ?

Oth.

Thy husband.

Emil.

That she was false to wedlock ?



Oth.

Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,
If Heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.

Emil.

My husband !

Oth.

What needs this iteration, woman ?
I say thy husband : dost understand the word ? —
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

Emil.

If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day ! he lies to the heart :
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

Oth.

Ha !

Emil.

Do thy worst :
This deed of thine is no more worthy Heaven
Than thou wast worthy her.

Oth.

Peace ! you were best.

Emil.

Thou hast not half the power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O, gull ! O, dolt !
As ignorant as dirt ! thou hast done a deed —

[*Othello offers at her with sword.*

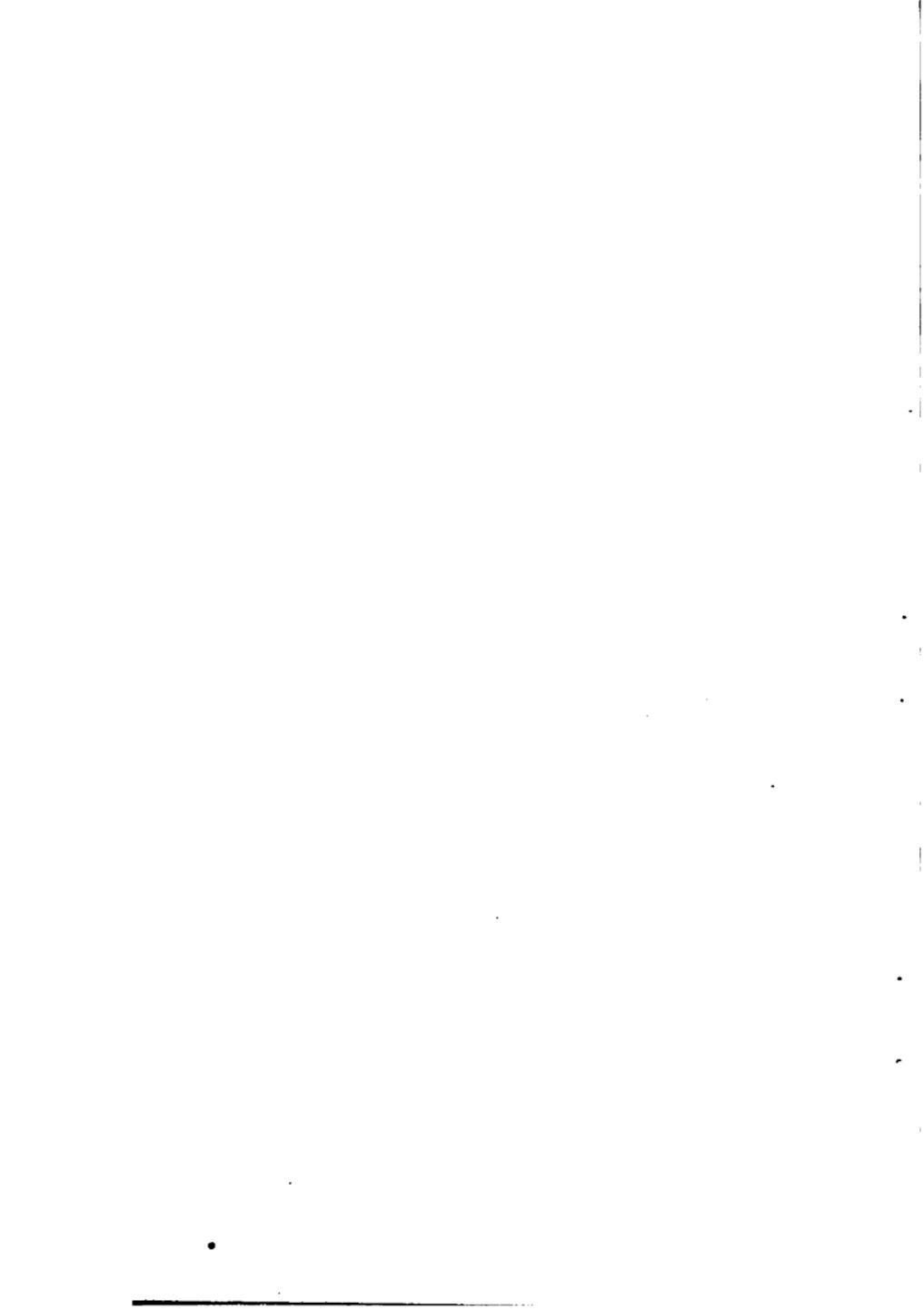
I care not for thy sword ; I 'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives. — Help ! help ! ho ! help !

[*Rushes out c., and re-enters, followed by Montano,
Gratiano, and Iago, c., with attendants.*

The Moor has killed my mistress ! Murder ! murder !

All.

What is the matter ?



Emil.

My mistress here lies murdered in her bed.
 O, are you come, Iago ? you have done well,
 That men must lay their murders on your neck.
 Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man :
 He says thou toldst him that his wife was false :
 I know thou didst not, thou 'rt not such a villain :
 Speak, for my heart is full.

Iago.

I told him what I thought ; and told no more
 Than what he found himself was apt and true.

Emil.

But did you ever tell him she was false ?

Iago.

I did.

Emil.

You told a lie ; an odious, damnèd lie ;
 Upon my soul, a lie ; a wicked lie :—
 She false with Cassio !— did you say with Cassio ?

Iago.

With Cassio, mistress.

What ! are you mad ? I charge you, get you home.

Emil.

Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak :
 'T is proper I obey him, but not now.—
 Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

Oth.

[At the bed.

O ! O ! O !

Emil.

Nay, lay thee down and roar ;
 For thou hast killed the sweetest innocent
 That e'er did lift up eye.

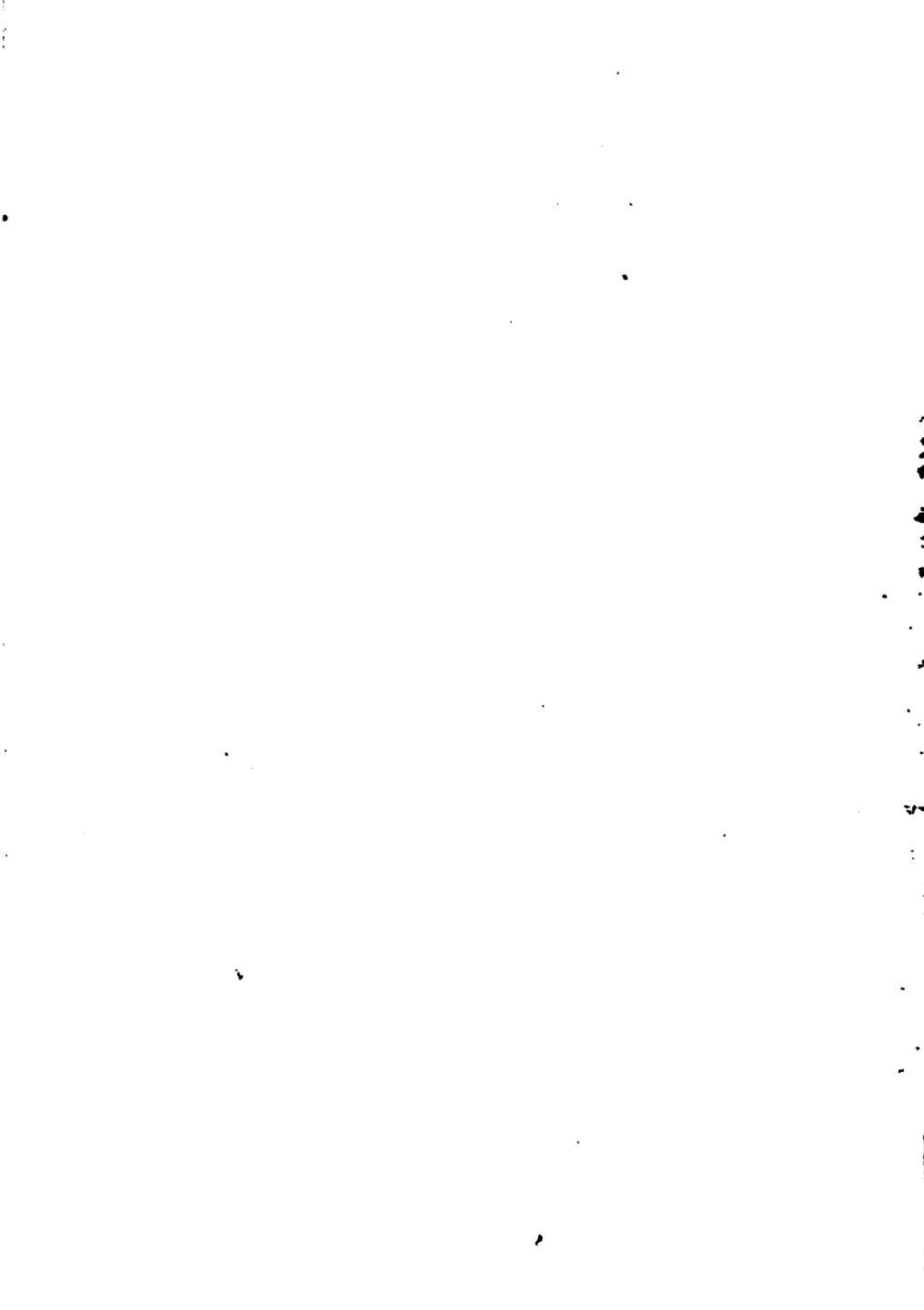
Oth.

[Rising.

O, she was false !

I scarce did know you, uncle :

[To Gratiano.



There lies your niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopped:
I know this act shows horrible and grim.

Grat.

Poor Desdemona ! I am glad thy father 's dead :
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain.

Oth.

'T is pitiful ; but yet Iago knows
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed ; Cassio confessed it :
And she did gratify his amorous works
With that recognisance and pledge of love
Which I first gave her ; I saw it in his hand :
It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

Emil.

O, Heaven ! O, heavenly powers !
That handkerchief thou speakest of
I found, by fortune, and did give my husband ;
For often, with a solemn earnestness,—
More than, indeed, belonged to such a trifle,—
He begged of me to steal it.

Iago.

Filth, thou liest !

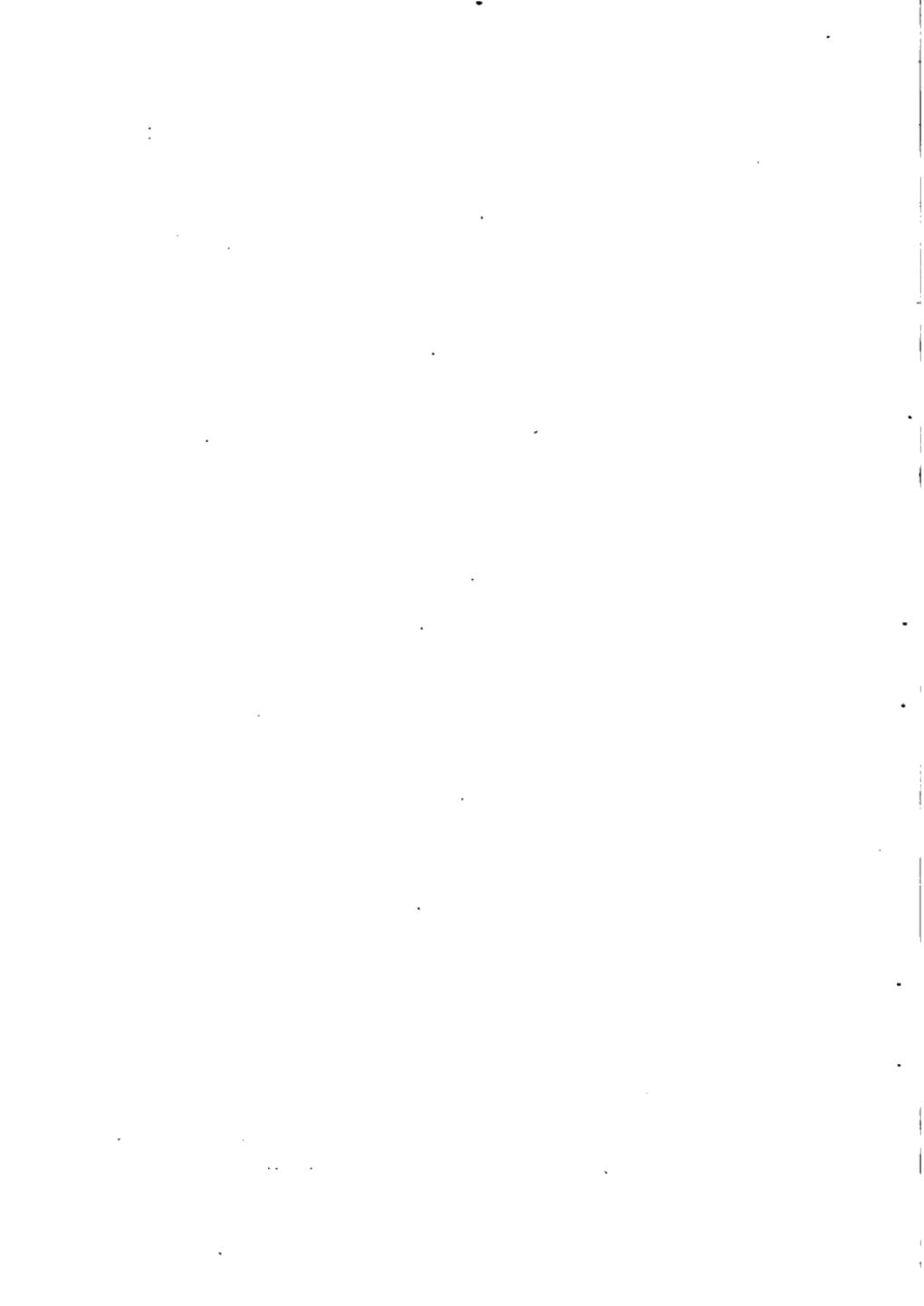
Emil.

By Heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.—

Oth.

Are there no stones in heaven
But what serve for the thunder ? — Precious villain !

[*Iago stabs Emilia.—Othello assaults Iago, and is disarmed by Montano.—Iago runs out c.—Emilia is supported by an attendant, who assists her to a couch in front of window.*



Mon. [To Gratiano.

Take you this weapon, [Gives Othello's sword to Gratiano.
And guard the door without ; let him not pass,
But kill him rather. I 'll after that same villain.

[*Exeunt Montano and Gratiano c., with attendants.*

Oth.

I am not valiant neither,
But every puny whipster gets my sword :—
But why should honour outlive honesty ?
Let it go all.

Emil.

Moor, she was chaste ; she loved thee, cruel Moor ;
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true ;
So speaking as I think, I die,— I die. [Dies.

Oth.

I have another weapon in this chamber ;
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper :—
O, here it is : [Takes a sword from recess near the bed.
Uncle, I must come forth.

Grat.

[Within.

If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear :
Thou hast no weapon and perforce must suffer.

Oth.

Look in upon me, then, and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

[Re-enter Gratiano.

Oth.

Behold, I have a weapon ;
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh : I have seen the day,
That, with this little arm and this good sword,
I have made my way through more impediments
Than twenty times your stop :— but, O, vain boast !
Who can control his fate ? 't is not so now.—
Be not afraid, though you do see me weaponed ;
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,



And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
 Do you go back dismayed? 't is a lost fear;
 Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
 And he retires:— where should Othello go?—
 Now, how dost thou look now? O, ill-starred wench!
 Pale as thy sheets! when we shall meet at compt,
 This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
 And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl!
 Even like thy chastity.—
 O, cursèd, cursèd slave!— Whip me, ye devils,
 From the possession of this heavenly sight!
 Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
 Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—
 O, Desdemona! Desdemona! dead! O, O, O!

[Enter Lodovico, Montano, Cassio, and Officers c.
 Cassio sits R.

Lod.

Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

Oth.

That 's he that was Othello;—here I am.

Lod.

Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

[*Iago is brought in.*

Oth.

I look down towards his feet,—but that 's a fable.—
 If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

[*Wounds Iago.*

Iago.

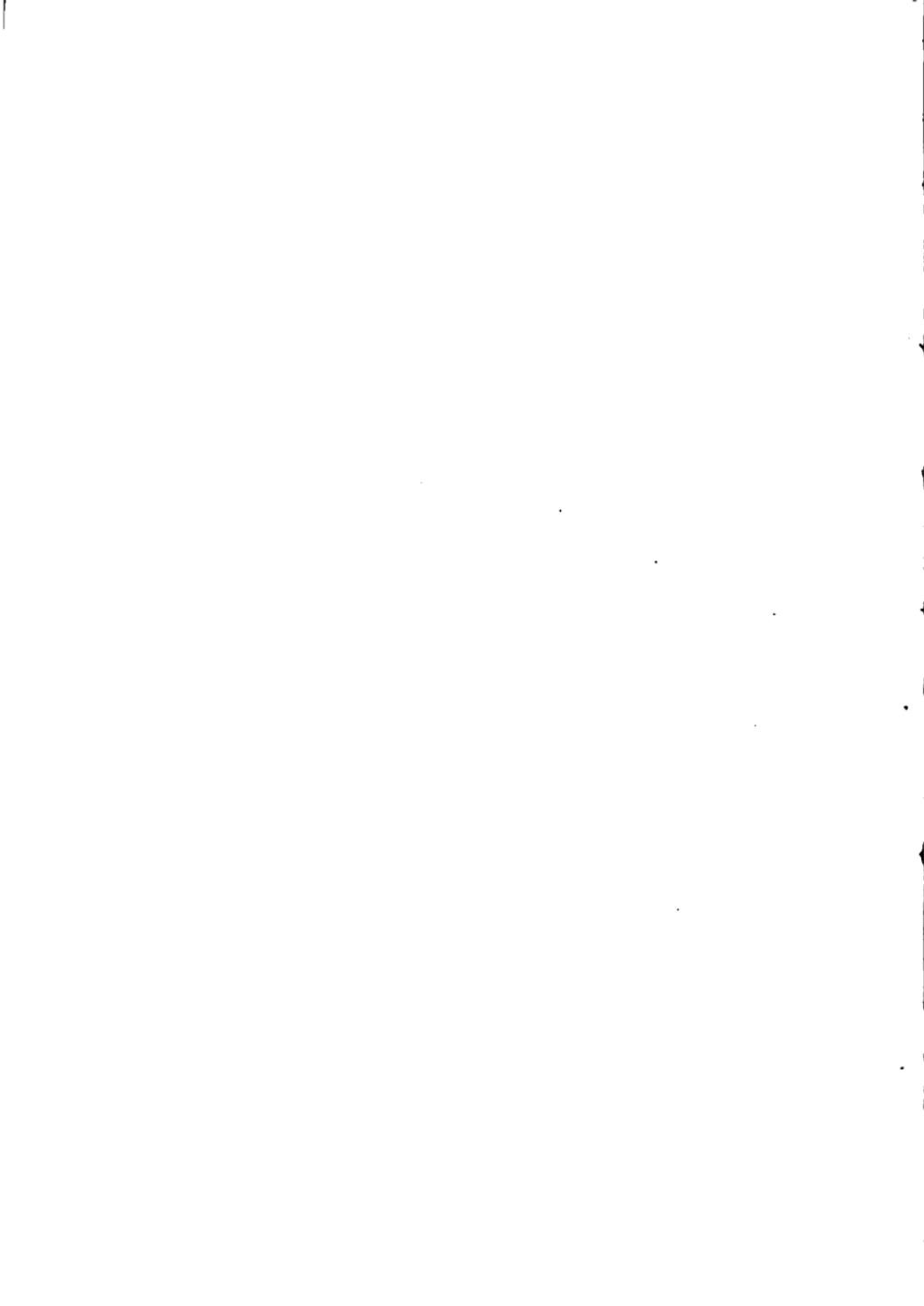
I bleed, sir; but not killed.

Oth.

I am not sorry neither: I 'd have thee live;
 For, in my sense, 't is happiness to die.

Lod.

O, thou Othello, that wert once so good,
 Fallen in the practice of a cursèd slave,
 What shall be said to thee?



Oth.

Why, anything :
 An honourable murderer, if you will ;
 For naught I did in hate, but all in honour.

Lod.

This wretch hath part confessed his villainy :
 Did you and he consent in Cassio's death ?

Oth.

Ay.

Cas.

Dear general, I never gave you cause.

Oth.

I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.—
 Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil
 Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body ?

Iago.

Demand me nothing : what you know, you know :
 From this time forth I never will speak word.

Oth.

[After a pause.]

Well, thou dost best.
 How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
 That was my wife's ?

Cas.

I found it in my chamber :
 And he himself confessed but even now
 That there he dropped it for a special purpose
 Which wrought to his desire.

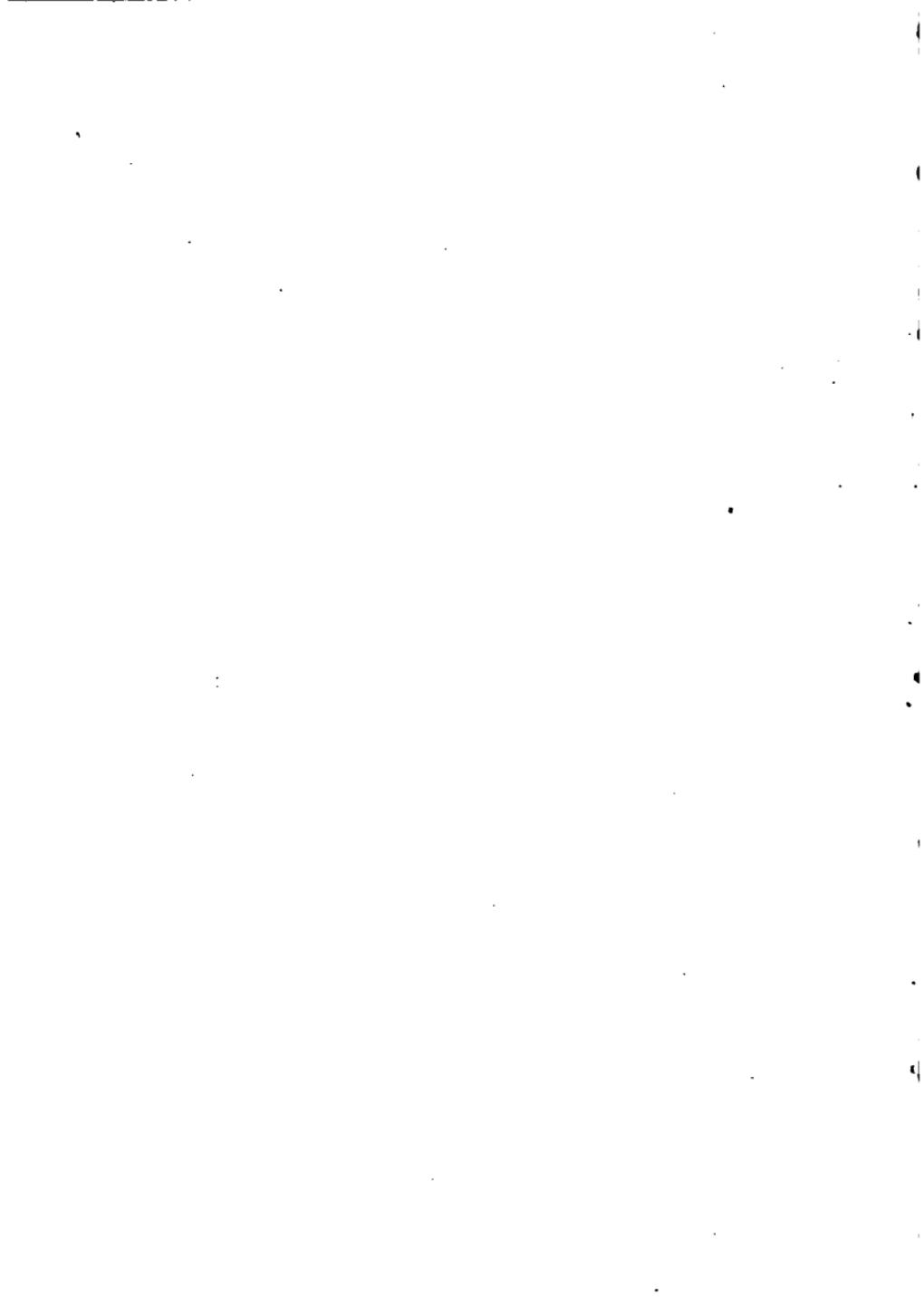
Oth.

O, fool ! fool ! fool !

Lod.

[To Othello.]

You must forsake this room, and go with us :
 Your power and your command is taken off,
 And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,—



If there be any cunning cruelty
That can torment him much and hold him long,
It shall be his.

[*An officer removes Iago, from where he stands, to the body of his wife, at the window.*

You shall close prisoner rest,
Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state.—Come, bring away.

Oth.

Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know it;—
No more of that.—I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one, that loved not wisely, but too well;
Of one, not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplexed in the extreme; of one, whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one, whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unuse'd to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
And say, besides,—that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcis'd dog
And smote him—thus.

[*Stabs himself.*

O, Desdemona!

[*Dies.*

[*Iago starts forward in wicked triumph. He is seized by an officer, who forces him to his knee.*

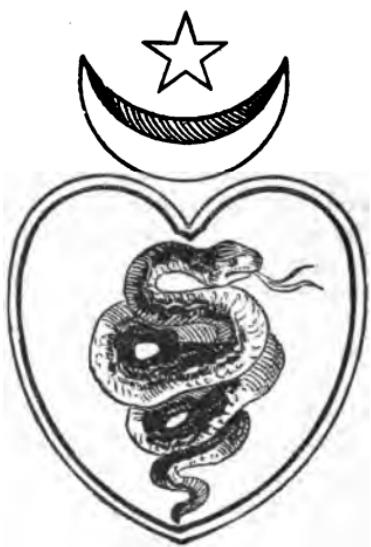
Lod.

O, bloody period!

Grat.

All that 's spoke is marred.

CURTAIN.



OTHELLO.

APPENDIX.

L.—THE ORIGINAL STORY OF OTHELLO.

“WHEN Shakespeare first became acquainted with the Moor of Venice of Giraldi Cinthio [whether in the original Italian, or the French translation, or in one of the little story-books that familiarized the people with the romance and the poetry of the South], he saw in that novel the scaffolding of ‘Othello.’ There was formerly in Venice a valiant Moor, says the story. It came to pass that a virtuous lady, of wonderful beauty, named Desdemona, became enamoured of his great qualities and noble virtues. The Moor loved her in return, and they were married—in spite of the opposition of the lady’s friends. It happened too, says the story, that the Senate of Venice appointed the Moor to the command of Cyprus, and that his wife determined to accompany him thither. Amongst the officers who attended upon the General was an ensign, of the most agreeable person but of the most depraved nature. The wife of this man was the friend of Desdemona, and they spent much time together. The wicked ensign became violently enamoured of Desdemona; but she, whose thoughts were wholly engrossed by the Moor, was utterly regardless of the ensign’s attentions. His love then became terrible hate, and he resolved to accuse Desdemona, to her husband, of infidelity, and to connect with the accusation a captain, of Cyprus. That officer, having struck a sentinel, was discharged from his command by the Moor; and Desdemona, interested in his favour, endeavoured to re-instate him in her husband’s good opinion. The Moor said, one day, to the ensign, that his wife was so importunate for the restoration of the officer that he must take him back. ‘If you would open your eyes, you would see plainer,’ said the ensign. The romance-writer continues to display the perfidious intrigues of the ensign against Desdemona. He steals a handkerchief which the Moor had given her—employing the agency of his own child. He contrives with the Moor to murder the captain, of Cyprus, after he

has made the credulous husband listen to a conversation to which he gives a false colour and direction ; and finally, the Moor and the guilty officer destroy Desdemona together, under circumstances of great brutality. The crime is, however, concealed, and the Moor is finally betrayed by his accomplice."

CHARLES KNIGHT.

"There is not," says Guizot, "a single detail in Shakespeare's tragedy which does not occur in Cinthio's novel." The student will find Cinthio's narrative in Payne-Collier's Shakespeare Library, Vol. ii. "The denouement alone," proceeds Guizot, "is different. In the novel, the Moor and the ensign together murder Desdemona during the night, pull down the ceiling on the bed in which she slept, and say she has been crushed by this accident. The true cause of her death long remains unknown. Ere long the Moor conceives a dislike to the ensign, and dismisses him from his army. Another adventure leads the ensign, on his return to Venice, to accuse the Moor of the murder of his wife. The Moor is recalled to Venice and put to the torture, but he denies the charge; he is banished, and the relatives of Desdemona have him assassinated in his exile. A new crime leads to the arrest of the ensign, and he dies, racked with torture. 'The ensign's wife, who had been informed of the whole affair,' says Giraldi Cinthio, 'after his death, thus circumstantially related this story.' " Mr. Dunlap, in his "History of Fiction," concurrently adds: "In all important variations Shakespeare has improved on his original. In a few other particulars he has deviated from it, with less judgment. In most respects he has adhered with close imitation. The characters of Iago, Desdemona, and Cassio are taken from Cinthio, with scarcely a shade of difference. The obscure hints and various artifices of the villain, to raise suspicion in the Moor, are the same in the novel and the drama."

II.—THE POET'S TRANSFIGURATION OF THE STORY OF OTHELLO.

"The narrative of Giraldi Cinthio is complete. Situations, incidents, progressive development of the principal event, external and material construction of a pathetic and singular adventure—all these things are contained in it, ready for use; and some of the conversations, even, are not wanting in a natural and touching simplicity. But the genius which supplies the actors to such a scene, which creates individuals, imparts to each his peculiar figure and character, and enables us to witness their actions, to hear their words, to anticipate their thoughts, and to enter

into their feelings ; that vivifying power which commands facts to rise, to go onward, to display themselves and to effect their accomplishment ; that creative breath, which, diffusing itself over the past, resuscitates it, and fills it, in some sort, with a present and imperishable vitality ; this is what Shakespeare alone possessed, and by means of this, from a forgotten novel, he made 'Othello.' All subsists, in fact, and yet all is changed. We no longer hear of a Moor, a lieutenant, an ensign, and a woman—the victim of jealousy and treason. We behold Othello, Cassio, Iago, and Desdemona, real and living beings, who resemble no other, who present themselves before the spectator—all entwined by the bonds of a common position, all carried away by the same event, yet each having personal nature and distinct physiognomy, and each co-operating to produce the general effect, by ideas, feelings, passions, and acts which are peculiar to each, and result, in each case, from specific individuality. It was not the fact, it was not the position, which struck the poet, and from which he sought to obtain all his means of awakening interest and emotion. The positions appeared to him to possess the conditions of a great dramatic scene ; the fact struck him as a suitable frame-work into which life might be appropriately introduced. Suddenly he gave birth to beings complete in themselves, animated and tragic, independently of every particular position and every determinate fact ; he brought them forth capable of feeling, and of displaying beneath our eyes, all that the special event in which they were about to take part could make human nature experience and produce ; and he launched them forth into this event, feeling very sure that, whatever circumstances might be furnished him by the narrative, he would find in them, as he had made them, a fruitful source of pathetic effects and of truth. Thus the poet creates, and such is poetical genius. Events, and even positions, are not what he deems most important, or what he takes delight in inventing ; his power aims at exercising itself otherwise than in searching after incidents of a more or less singular character, and adventures of a more or less touching nature ; it manifests itself by the creation of man himself ; and when it creates man, it creates him complete, armed at all points, as he should be, to suffice for all the vicissitudes of life, and to present the aspect of reality in every sense of the word."

GUIZOT.

III.—THE SCHEME AND SUBSTANCE OF OTHELLO.

"Coleridge has justly said that the agonized doubt which lays hold of the Moor is not the jealousy of a man of naturally jealous temper, and he contrasts Othello with Leontes, in 'The Winter's Tale,' and

Leonatus in 'Cymbeline.' A mean watchfulness or prying suspicion is the last thing that Othello could be guilty of. He is of a free and noble nature, naturally trustful, with a kind of grand innocence, retaining some of his barbaric simpleness of soul in midst of the subtle and astute politicians of Venice. He is great in simple, heroic action, but unversed in the complex affairs of life, and a stranger to the malignant deceits of the debased Italian character. Nothing is more chivalrous, more romantic, than the love of Othello and Desdemona. The beautiful Italian girl is fascinated by the regal strength and grandeur, and tender protectiveness of the Moor. He is charmed by the sweetness, the sympathy, the gentle disposition, the gracious womanliness of Desdemona. But neither quite rightly knows the other; there is none of that perfect equality and perfect knowledge between them which unites so flawlessly Brutus and Portia.

"Desdemona and Othello are parted on their voyage to Cyprus, and at meeting their happiness touches a height which is almost too rare and exquisite. From the moment of rapture and reunion to the moment when Othello slays himself by the body of his murdered wife, there is an unalleviated intensity of tragic pain. Othello cannot hate Desdemona; his misery is that he must love her, although he strives to hate, and must slay her, although he would die that she might be pure and live. There is no character in Shakespeare's plays so full of serpentine power and serpentine poison as Iago. The Iachimo, of 'Cymbeline,' is a faint sketch in water-colours of the absolute villain Iago. He is envious of Cassio, and suspects that the Moor may have wronged his honour; but his malignancy is out of all proportion to even its alleged motives. Cassio, notwithstanding his moral weakness, is a chivalrous nature, possessed by enthusiastic admiration of his great general and the beautiful lady who is his wife. But Iago can see neither human virtue nor greatness. All things to him are common and unclean, and he is content that they should be so. He is not the sly, sneaking, and too manifest villain of some of the actors of his part. He is 'Honest Iago,' and passes for a rough yet shrewd critic of life, who is himself frank and candid. To ensnare the nobly guileless Othello was, therefore, no impossible task. Shakespeare does not allow Iago to triumph; his end is wretched as his life had been. And Othello, restored to love through such tragic calamity, dies, once more reunited to his wife, and loyal, in spite of all his wrongs, to the city of his adoption. It is he who has sinned, and not she who was dearer to him than himself, and of his own wrongs and griefs he can make a sudden end."

EDWARD DOWDEN.

IV.—PLACE OF THE ACTION OF OTHELLO.

“I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs,
 A palace and a prison on each hand;
 I saw from out the wave her structures rise,
 As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
 A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
 Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
 O'er the far times, when many a subject land
 Looked to the wingèd Lion's marble piles,
 Where Venice sat in state, throned on her hundred isles !”

LORD BYRON.

“O, beautiful, beneath the magic moon
 To walk the watery way of palaces !
 O, beautiful, o'er-vaulted with gemmed blue,
 This spacious court ! with colour and with gold,
 With cupolas and pinnacles and points,
 And crosses multiplex, and tips and balls
 [Wherewith the bright stars unreproving mix,
 Nor scorn by hasty eyes to be confused];
 Fantastically perfect this lone pile
 Of Oriental glory; these long ranges
 Of classic chiselling; this gay, flickering crowd,
 And the calm Campanile,—beautiful !
 O, beautiful !

“My mind is in her rest; my heart at home
 In all around; my soul secure in place,
 And the vext needle perfect to her poles.
 Aimless and hopeless in my life, I seemed
 To thread the winding by-ways of the town,
 Bewildered, baffled, hurried hence and thence,
 All at cross purpose ever with myself,
 Unknowing whence or whither. Then, at once,
 At a step, I crown the Campanile's top,
 And view all mapped below: Islands, lagoon,
 An hundred steeples, and a myriad roofs,
 The fruitful champaign, and the cloud-capt Alps,
 And the broad Adriatic !”

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.



"The Republic of Venice became the virtual sovereign of Cyprus in 1471; when the State assumed the guardianship of Catharine Cornaro, who had married the illegitimate son of John III., of Lusignan, and, being left a widow, wanted the protection of the State, to maintain the power which her husband had usurped. The island was then first garrisoned by Venetian troops. Catharine, in 1489, abdicated the sovereignty in favour of the Republic. Cyprus was retained by the Venetians till 1570, when it was invaded by a powerful Turkish force, and was finally subjected to the dominion of Selim II., in 1571. From that period it has formed a part of the Turkish Empire. Leikosia, the island capital of the island, was taken by storm; and Famagusta, the principal sea-port, capitulated after a long and gallant defence. It is evident, therefore, that we must refer the action of 'Othello' to a period before the subjugation of Cyprus by the Turks. The locality of the scene after the First Act must be placed at Famagusta, which was strongly fortified—a fact which Shakespeare must have known: Othello, in the Second Scene of the Third Act, says: 'I will be walking on the works.'"

CHARLES KNIGHT.

"We learn from the play that there was a junction of the Turkish fleet at Rhodes, in order for the invasion of Cyprus; that it first came sailing towards Cyprus, then went to Rhodes, there met another squadron, and then resumed its way to Cyprus. These are real historical facts, which happened when Mustapha, Solyman's General, attacked Cyprus, in May, 1570."

ISAAC REED.

The island of Cyprus is situated south of Asia Minor, in that portion of the Mediterranean called the Levant. It was anciently divided into many small kingdoms. It was originally possessed by the Phœnicians, from whom it passed to the Greeks, and subsequently to the Egyptians and Persians. After the victories of Alexander it declared for Macedon. It next became a portion of the Greco-Egyptian Kingdom of the Ptolemies; then of the Roman and Byzantine Empires. The Arabs conquered it, 648, A. D. In 1191 it was taken by Richard Cœur-de-Lion, who ceded it to the Templars. After several vicissitudes it came into the possession of the Venetians, from whom it was finally conquered by the Turks, in 1571. It is about 140 miles long, and about 60 miles broad. A bold and rugged mountain range runs through the whole length of the island,—attaining to an elevation of more than 7,000 feet above the sea. The soil is fertile. The land is beautified by fine forests of oak and other wood, and is rich in minerals. The chief towns of

Cyprus are Leikosia, Famagusta, Larnica, and Limassol. The population is about 135,000. Cyprus is now a possession of Great Britain—acquired [1878] by the wise, far-seeing, and brilliant diplomacy of the Earl of Beaconsfield.

V.—TIME OF THE ACTION OF OTHELLO.

The time occupied by the action of "Othello" is neither distinctly stated nor clearly indicated in the text and conduct of the tragedy. It can be only approximately ascertained. The incidents of Act First, as is perfectly obvious, are supposed to pass within one night. A sufficient time has then to be allowed for making the voyage from Venice to Cyprus. Venice is at the head of the Adriatic. Cyprus is in the Levant. The distance between them is about 1,200 miles. The expedition of Othello, we are told, was overtaken and retarded by a violent storm; so that the Moor, who had been the first to start, was the last to arrive. The trip must be considered to consume about fourteen days. When, at length, all the characters are arrived in Cyprus, the action proceeds with equal clearness and despatch. The incidents of Act Second—as the reader of it will instantly perceive—are supposed to pass within the night immediately succeeding the arrival of Othello. The dawn has already come when Iago and Roderigo separate. That very morning Cassio, who says—in a passage which is cut—that he has not been abed, comes to seek Desdemona, begging her intercession with her husband, that he may be re-instated in his place. A lapse of some time must here be supposed—since it would be monstrous to assume that Othello could be led to repudiate his wife on the very next day after their nuptial. A day comes, however, when the Moor at last changes with Iago's poison. That day, as may be gathered from Desdemona's supplicatory speech to Othello, in behalf of his disgraced lieutenant, is Sunday; and on that day occur the terrible scenes of the great Third Act. Othello, duped by the infernal speciousness of Iago's character, helped by something barbaric and blind in his own nature,—[for the schemes of his betrayer are, by themselves, absolutely preposterous and as transparent as glass],—then at once enjoins the slaughter of Cassio: "Within these three days let me hear thee say that Cassio's not alive!" The incidents of the Fourth and Fifth Acts, accordingly, can be viewed as occurring with great rapidity, and occupying but a brief time. Allowance, however, has to be made for another voyage from Venice to Cyprus,—that, namely, of Lodovico and Gratiano, who convey a mandate from the Senate, recalling Othello, and devolving his command on Cassio.

Allowance has also to be made for considerable shifting of the persons from scene to scene; for various deeds and colloquies; for the ripening of Iago's plots; and for the natural play of numerous and diversified emotions. Still, poetry has its license; and the tragedy of "Othello" is not a photograph. All things considered, though, it is, perhaps, best to suppose that affairs so momentous, and conduct and experience so fraught with agony, terror, and pathos, have "ample room and verge enough," and are not compressed into the narrow compass of a few hours.

W. W.

VI.—COSTUME FOR OTHELLO.

Venetian dresses, of the latter part of the Sixteenth Century, are the correct apparel for the persons in "Othello." A part—which is here set forth suggestively—will indicate the whole. *Othello*—*First dress*: A long gown of cashmere, wrought with gold and various colours. This is looped up to the hip, on the left side, with jewels. A Moorish burnoose, striped with purple and gold. Purple velvet shoes, embroidered with gold and pearl. A sash of green and gold. A jewelled chain. *Second dress*: Steel-plate armour. A white burnoose, made of African goat's hair. *Third dress*: A long, white gown, Moorish, with hood, and with scarlet trimmings. A white sash, made of goat's hair. Scarlet velvet shoes. Pearl ear-rings.—These dresses, it will be observed, although conformable to Christian ideas, are devised with a view to express the gorgeous barbaric taste of the Moor. Some of the old actors used to wear Turkish costume. This is magnificent in colour and effect, but it is incorrect, since Othello is described as a Christian convert.

A costume for Desdemona is as follows: *First dress*: White satin train, trimmed with illusion and pearls. High, pointed corsage, with ruff. Long, puffed sleeves: pearls between puffs. Stomacher, elaborately embroidered with pearls. Girdle of the same. Diamond ear-rings, cross and pin. Mary Stuart cap, made of white satin and pearls. *Second dress*: Drab satin train, embroidered with gold. Blue satin poncha, embroidered with gold. Blue satin Mary Stuart cap, trimmed with gold leaves. *Third dress*: Rose-coloured satin train; the front breadth of white satin trimmed with three point-lace flounces, headed by a pearl fringe. High, pointed corsage, with ruff. White pointed stomacher, embroidered with pearls. Pearl girdle. Sleeves puffed with white satin. Bands of rose and pearls between puffs. Mary Stuart cap, of rose satin, trimmed with pearls.

Reference may advantageously be made to Cæsar Vecellio's "Habiti Antichi e Moderni," for particulars as to costume. The general of the

Venetian forces, says Charles Knight, wore a peculiar habit, consisting of a full gown of crimson velvet, with loose sleeves, over which was worn a mantle of cloth of gold, buttoned upon the right shoulder with massive gold buttons. The cap was of crimson velvet. The baton of office was made of silver, and was ensigned with the winged lion of St. Mark. Soldiers wore the Venetian morion. The armour of the period of Othello was much the same throughout Europe. The student will not fail to remember that perfect accuracy of costume, in the dressing of "Othello,"—and, for that matter, in the dressing of "The Merchant of Venice," "Romeo and Juliet," and many other plays that are associated with remote historic periods—would lead to ridiculous results. Poetical license and good taste are, at all times, equally desirable and allowable in the stage treatment of all plays.

W. W.

VII.—THE COLOUR OF OTHELLO.

It used to be the practice of the stage to paint the Moor quite black—to present him, in fact, as a Negro. There are expressions in the text which, taken literally, and without allowance for the moods and attitude of the speakers, would afford a warrant for this practice. But,—since to make Othello a Negro is to unpoetize the character, and to deepen whatever grossness may already subsist in the subject of the tragedy,—it seems the better way to remember that poetry has a privilege to idealize all it touches, and that expressions of opinion are not statements of fact—and may therefore be disregarded. The persons who call the Moor "thick lips" and "the black Othello" are not his friends—to state it mildly. Besides, there is a clearly marked difference between a Moor and a Negro. The Moor should be painted a pale cinnamon colour, which is at once truthful and picturesque. Shakespeare has, in my opinion, Anglicized the whole affair, leaving nothing barbaric in Othello but his capacity of animal delirium. He gets his terrible catastrophe, however, by means of this—ending a frightful storm of frenzy with a dread calm which is extremely awful; and he gets a splendid effect of contrast in the elements of colour and nationality.

W. W.

"Moors. Latin, *Mauri*, Dark: Spanish, *Moros*. A people who form the great majority of the population of Barbary. Their appearance indicates their origin, which is a mixture of the Mauri,—from whom they derive their name,—Numidians, Phoenicians, Romans, and Arabs, who have successively held possession of the country. In consequence, they

are found to vary considerably in appearance and character, in different parts of Barbary, but all show more or less strongly the symptoms of a considerable infusion of Arabian blood. They are a well-formed race, with fine Oriental features, and a mild and melancholy expression of countenance. * * * They are voluptuous and cruel."

CHAMBERS'S ENCYCLOPÆDIA, vol. vi., p. 561.

"It was the policy of the Venetian Republic to employ foreign mercenaries, and especially in offices of command, for the obvious purpose of lessening to the utmost the dangers of cabal and intrigue at home. The families of senators, or other chief citizens, were in the habit of seeing, in their dark-complexioned guests, those only who were distinguished by ability, and by the official rank thereby gained:—picked men, whose hue might be forgotten in their accomplishments."

QUOTED BY CHARLES KNIGHT.

"Even if we suppose this [the practice of painting Othello as a Negro], an uninterrupted tradition of the theatre, and that Shakespeare himself, from want of scenes, and from the experience that nothing could be made too marked for the senses of his audience, had practically sanctioned it, would this prove aught concerning his own intention as a poet for all ages?"

COLERIDGE.

VIII.—CHARACTERS IN OTHELLO.

"Othello is something far more than a blind and jealous husband urged to commit murder by his jealousy. This is only his position during the play; and his character goes far beyond his position. * * * Iago is not merely an irritated enemy, desirous of revenge, or an ordinary rascal, anxious to destroy a happiness which he cannot contemplate with satisfaction: he is a cynical and reasoning wretch, who has made for himself a philosophy of egotism and a science of crime; who looks upon men merely as instruments or obstacles to his personal interests; who despises virtue as an absurdity, and yet hates it as an injury; who preserves entire independence of thought, while engaged in the most servile conduct; and who, at the very moment when his crimes are about to cost him his life, still enjoys, with ferocious pride, the evil which he has done—as if it were a proof of his superiority. * * * Cassio is not introduced merely to become the object of Othello's jealousy, and as a necessity of the drama: he has his own character, inclinations, qualities and defects; and from what he is naturally flows the influence which he

exercises upon what occurs to him. Emilia is not merely an attendant employed by the poet as an instrument either of the entanglement or of the discovery of the perfidies which lead to the catastrophe: she is the wife of Iago, whom she does not love, and whom she obeys because she fears him; but, although she distrusts him, she has actually contracted, in the society of that man, somewhat of the immorality of his mind; * * * and yet she is kind-hearted and attached to her mistress, and detests evil and deeds of darkness. * * * Forget the events, set aside the drama, and all these personages will continue real, animated and distinct; they possess inherent vitality, and their existence will not disappear with their position. In them is displayed the creative power of the poet."

GUIZOT.

" The source of the pathos throughout—of that pathos which at once softens and deepens the tragic effect—lies in the character of Desdemona. No woman differently constituted could have excited the same intense and painful passion, without losing something of that exalted charm which invests her from beginning to end, which we are apt to impute to the interest of the situation and to the poetical colouring, but which lies, in fact, in the very essence of the character. Desdemona, with all her timid flexibility and soft acquiescence, is not weak; for the negative alone is weak; and the mere presence of goodness and affection implies in itself a species of power; power without consciousness, power without effort, power with repose—the soul of grace."

MRS. JAMESON.

IX.—THE SOUL AND SCOPE OF OTHELLO.

*** * * Wedlock, so far as it is the chief element and a leading motive in the social development of the human race, is the position of life from which the poet has surveyed the horizon of the tragic view of the world and Providence. On this account it is not love alone that is here presented to us. * * * In 'Othello' love stands in organic and indissoluble communion, both with conjugal fidelity and duty, and with honour—that indispensable attribute of man's life and activity.

*** * * Honour, in its true import, is the necessary condition of man's activity. He ought to act, and must act, in and for the world, in which his natural avocation and divine destination exist. * * * Honour is the indispensable bond between a man's enterprise and the sphere in which he exerts it. And this is the true justification of honour. In itself it has no validity: it derives its right from a higher principle of true morality, which is independent of the world, and stands in immediate

reference to God alone. If honour be torn from its true root and soil—that morality in comparison with which this world and all its pursuits are at best of relative importance—it becomes a mere spectral phantom: whatever there is in it of grandeur and might, once separated from its god-like origin, rebounds with demoniacal force upon its possessor. Thus it happens with Othello. * * * Othello in his inmost soul is by no means jealous. This low passion, whatever Iago may pretend, is altogether foreign to his nature. A man is not, properly speaking, jealous, who has good cause for jealousy. * * * The desire for revenge seizes his mind but transiently. * * * Revenge seeks but to heap misery and ruin on the hated head: but, how touchingly does Othello urge Desdemona, before her death, to confess and repent, that her soul may be saved from eternal damnation! Anger, jealousy and revenge are but the momentary phases under which love and honour—the ruling emotions of his soul—exhibit themselves, as deeply wounded and violated, and, consequently, as contending with each other in the annihilating struggle of conflicting passions. When the supposed infidelity of his wife, and the supposed treachery of his friend Cassio have robbed him of love, and whatever else in life is dear to him, and his mind, deprived of its sole stay, reels and totters and is near to shipwreck, then he clings convulsively, with all his might, to the other and only tie that still remains to him—honour. His honour, at least, he will preserve. But his soul, once out of tune, is unable to resume its self-possession. * * * Thus does he ruin what he wishes to save. * * * And so here we behold all the subordinate agents pervaded and impelled by an intrinsic necessity, revolving around one organic centre in mutual relationship and interaction. * * * 'Othello' must be regarded as a tragedy of intrigue. By such a view of it the tragic element first obtains its true significancy. For then the soothing, calming element which is covertly contained in it, comes distinctly forward; then do Othello's sufferings and death teach us that man's wit and cunning may, no doubt, bring low a great and noble character, but cannot rob him of his intrinsic nobility, his greatness of soul, and his hope in God's mercy and compassion—in which Othello, amidst tears of repentance and atonement, full of 'soul soothing balsam,' dies." ULRICI.

X.—THE MEANING OF OTHELLO.

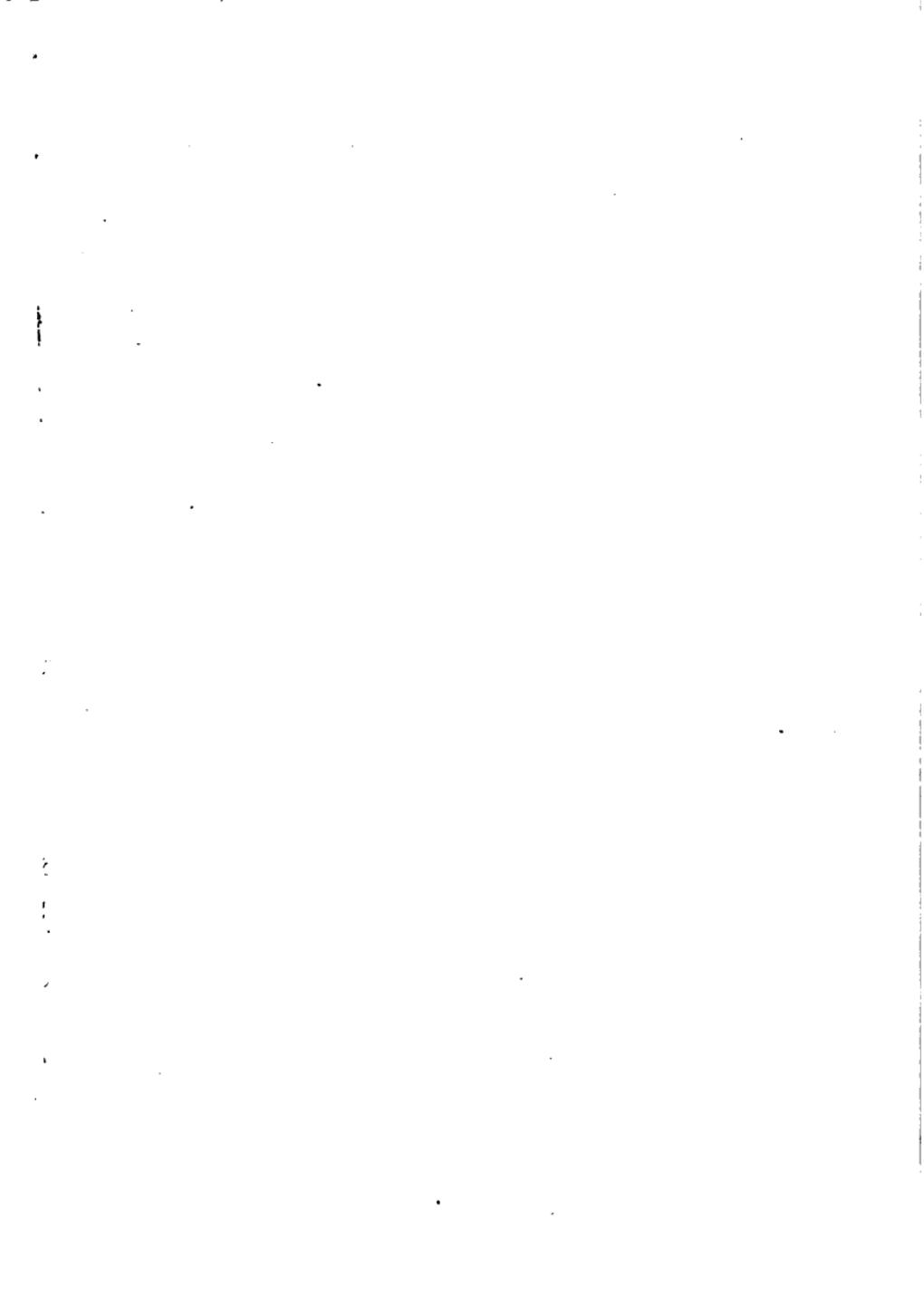
In the pathos of its picture of human life, in the pity which it inspires, and in the consequent ennobling influence which it exerts, "Othello" is only a little less than "Lear," and thus only a little lower than the

highest. The difference is in degree of misery. Lear sacrifices himself before he is sacrificed by his children. Othello is simply despoiled and ruined by his enemy. The old king comes a little nearer to the heart, therefore, and the spectacle of his anguish is somewhat more pitifully desolate, for this reason. In the tears we weep over that venerable ruin, there is a sort of blind submission to fate; a dazed sense of the weakness of man, when at strife with nature; a tender emotion of infinite sorrow over the utter infirmity of the human race. Our grief is so great that it drowns our anger: and Regan and Goneril and Edmund are forgotten, with the rest of the lumber of the commonplace world. The spectacle of Othello's misery may be equally agonizing; but the emotion it inspires is not so ineffably piteous. In our tears for him, there is fire—the fire of a strong and active rage against the diabolical intellect that has destroyed him. He represents to us magnanimous virtue, simple and stalwart goodness, leonine port and power, commingled with the trustful candour of innocent childhood. He has not outlived his time nor the sunshine. He is not yet, in any sense, due to death. There may be autumnal tints in the foliage of his garden; but it is not amiss that he gathers the ripe fruits of life, love, and happiness; and we feel that he ought to possess them. When, therefore, his glorious manhood of nature is broken by the adverse will of a malignant genius,—against which he is utterly powerless and defenceless,—our rage strikes hands with our sorrow, and the tide of our hate rises equally with the tide of our love. But, though in the scale of emotion a little lower than the highest, these feelings are high, are grand, are sacred; and our hearts resent the least approach toward trifling with sensibilities so acute and experiences so vital and tragic. Just as no soul that really feels will brook a light mention of the names of the beloved dead, so no soul that really feels will brook a vain and casual meddling with those immortal ideals in which Shakespeare has expressed the sum of human greatness and human misery.

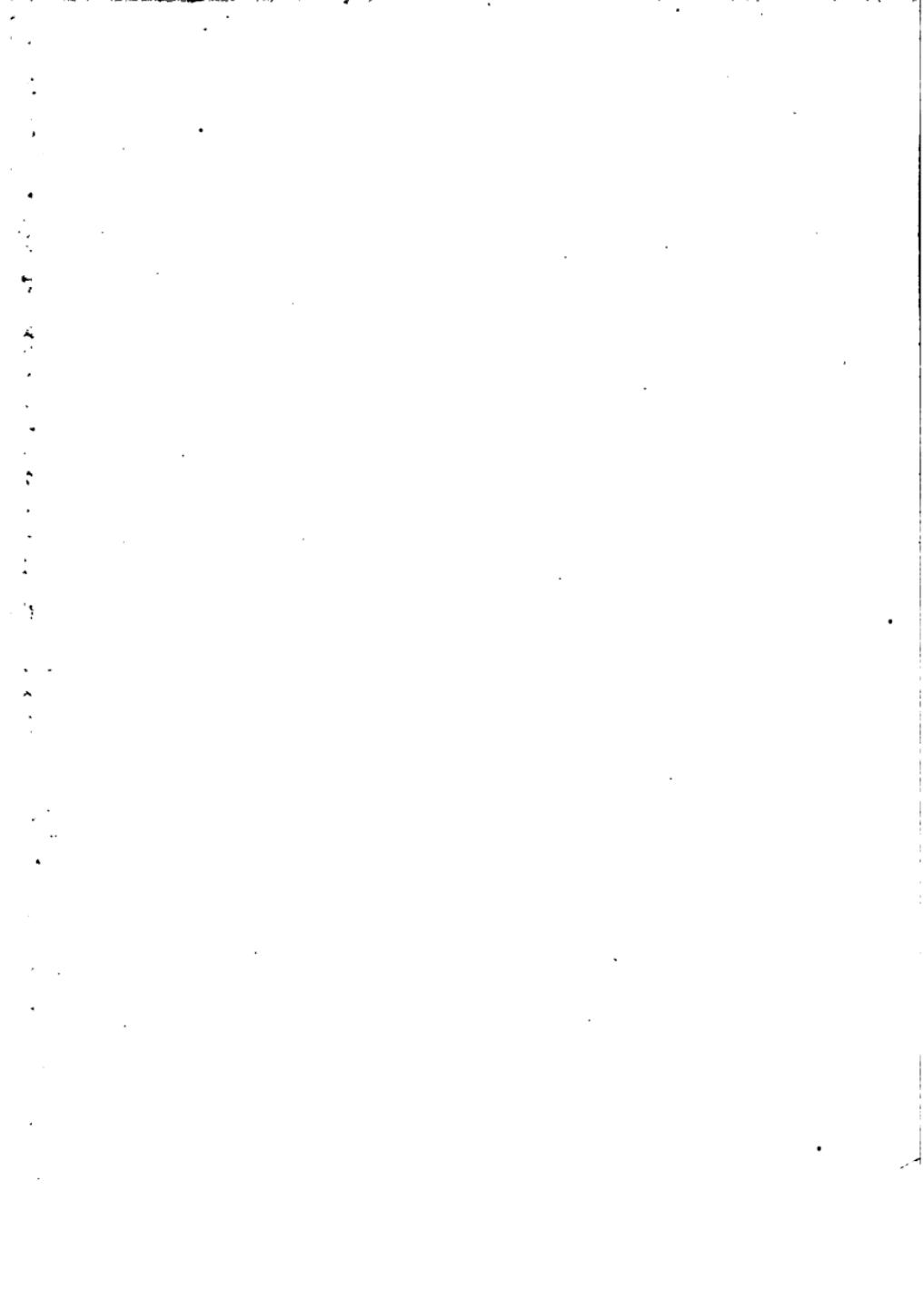
WILLIAM WINTER.

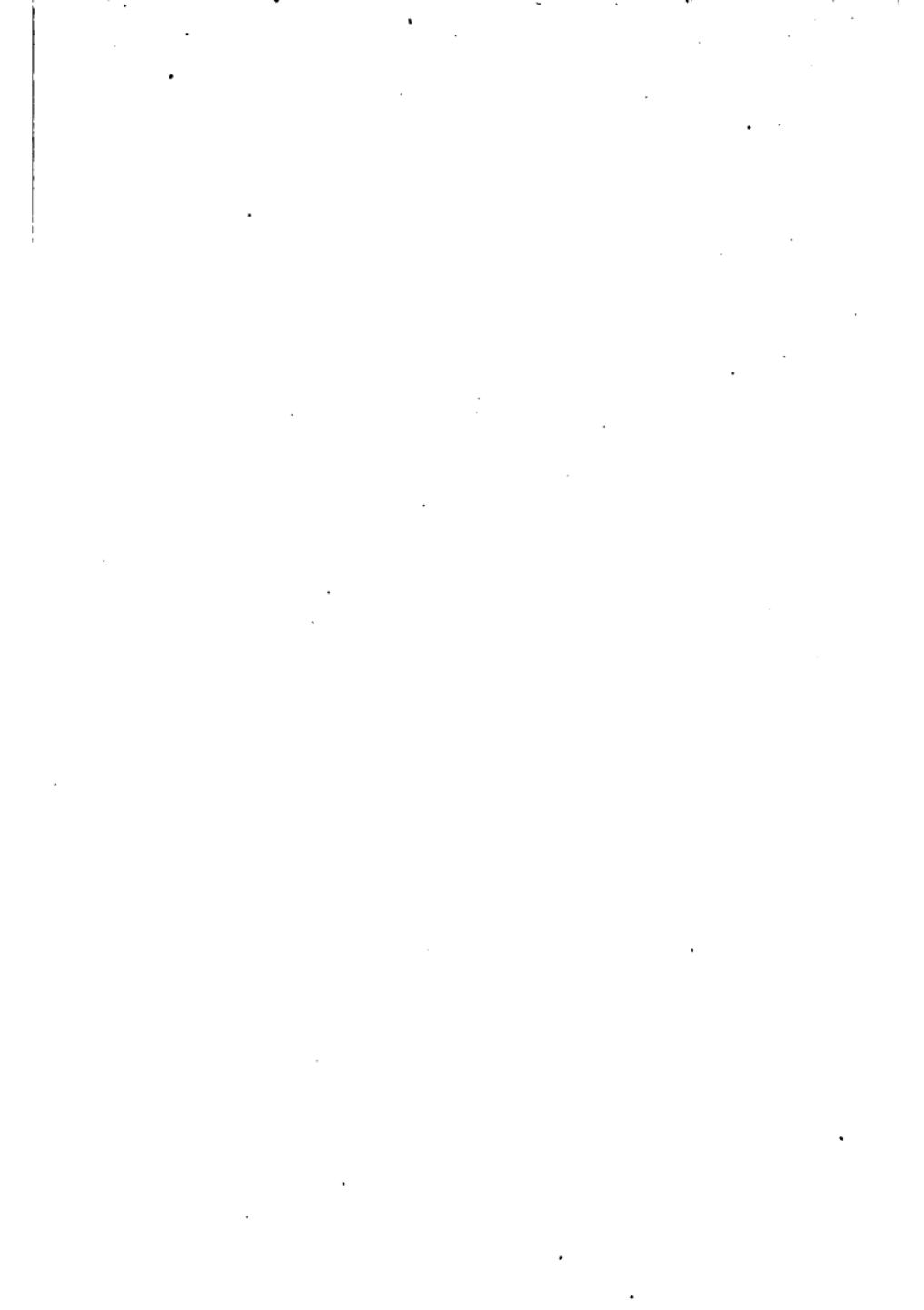
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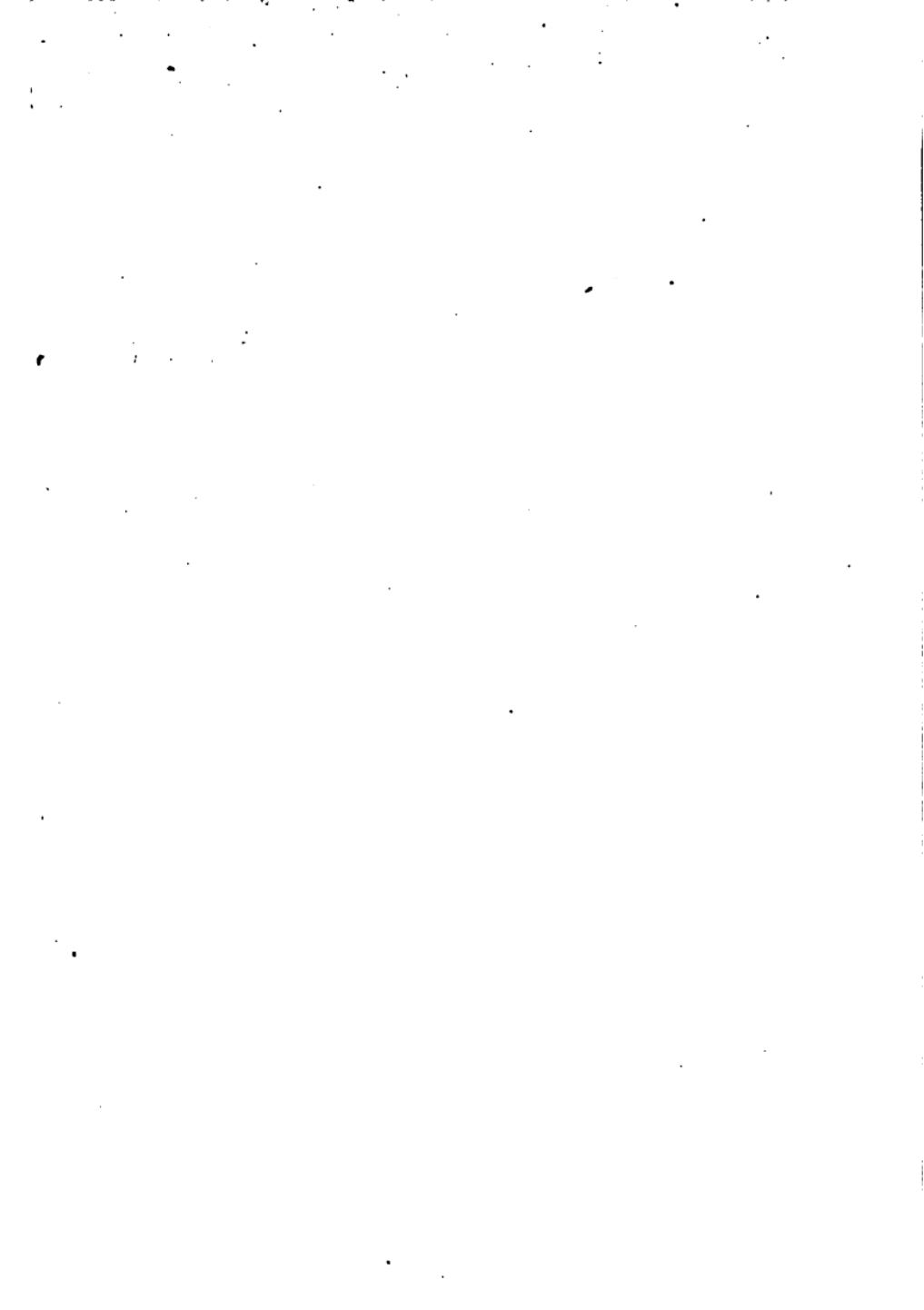
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